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The 19-year-old beats Poland's Maja Chwalinska in final

P11



Reddy to stay, status quo on portfolio for now

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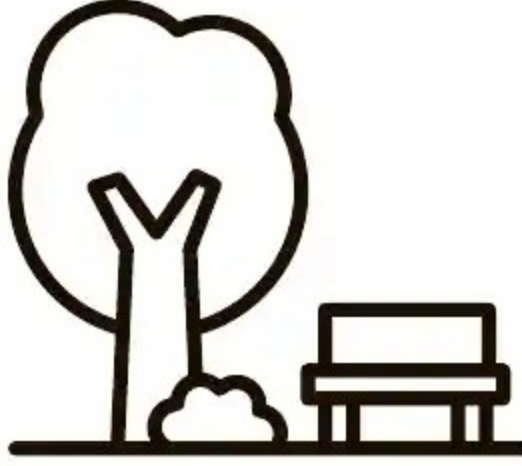
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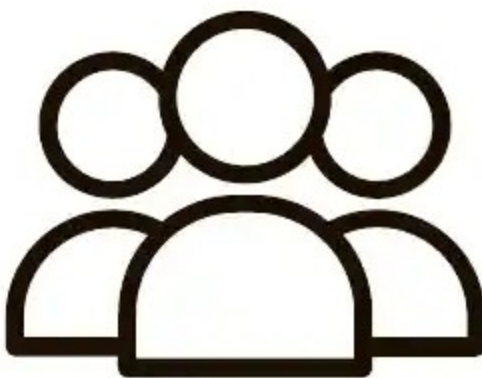
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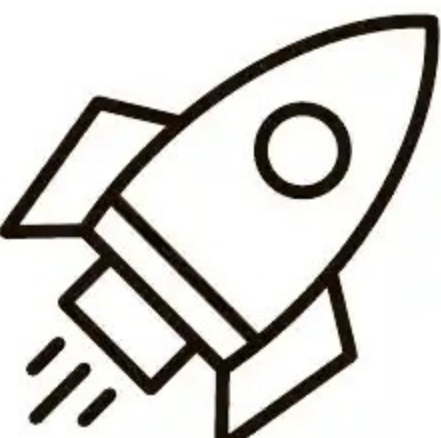
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Reddy to stay, status quo on portfolio for now

No clarity on additional portfolios to minister

BENGALURU, DHNS

Disgruntled Water Resources Minister Ramalinga Reddy, who resigned Friday for being denied the Bengaluru Development portfolio, has agreed to stay on in the Cabinet following intense negotiations with the Congress leadership.

While this brought an end to the first major political crisis faced by Chief Minister D K Shivakumar's government, uncertainty remains over Reddy's demand for the Bengaluru Development portfolio, which the party high command has allotted to Krishna Byre Gowda. "My resignation has been rejected. I have shared my views and opinions before the high command. Let them take a call now," Reddy told reporters after the talks.

Apparently, Shivakumar and Congress general secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala have discussed offering Reddy an additional 'people-facing' portfolio — Cooperation or Muzrai. The party is also discussing giving Reddy a key responsibility during the upcoming civic polls under the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA).

Bengaluru Development Minister Krishna Byre Gowda also met Surjewala, triggering speculation that a swap of portfolios was on the cards. However, no decision has been made as changing a portfolio allotted by the high command could send a wrong message to other disgruntled ministers, sources said.



Muniyappa seeks DCM post

Senior Congress lawmaker K H Muniyappa on Saturday confirmed having sought a deputy chief ministerial position for himself during his talks with top party leader Rahul Gandhi. Muniyappa, the food & civil supplies minister, was unhappy with his portfolio and publicly criticised the Congress leadership on Friday for not treating seniors with the respect they deserve. **Details on Page 6**

There are also talks that BDA and BMRDA, which Shivakumar has kept with himself, may be given to Reddy later on.

Speaking to reporters, Surjewala said Reddy had withdrawn his resignation. "There was some misunderstanding and he shall continue to work

as a loyal soldier and minister of the party," Surjewala said.

The breakthrough came after a series of meetings involving Shivakumar, Surjewala and Karnataka Congress president B K Hariprasad.

Congress leaders spent much of Friday night and Saturday attempting to resolve the standoff. Shivakumar personally met Reddy in Bengaluru on Friday night and sought to pacify him.

"We both are friends and have worked together for the party. It is a family problem which we will sort out. Moreover, he has sent his resignation letter on WhatsApp and I will not accept it at any cost," Shivakumar said.

Seeking to downplay the episode, Surjewala described Reddy as one of the Congress party's most senior leaders and an "asset". He also accused the BJP of attempting to exploit the developments.

Despite the truce, the final word on Reddy's portfolio is not out yet.

Sooryavanshi to be youngest to play for India

Shreyas takes over T20I captaincy from Suryakumar Yadav

NEW DELHI, PTI

Winds of change swept across India's T20I set-up as Shreyas Iyer on Saturday took over the captaincy from Suryakumar Yadav, and wunderkind Vaibhav Sooryavanshi found a place in the squad for the twin tour of Ireland and England.

At 15 years and 71 days old, Sooryavanshi becomes the youngest ever player to feature in an Indian cricket team, surpassing the long-standing record held by the great Sachin Tendulkar.

Tendulkar was 16 years and

205 days when he made his Test debut against Pakistan at Karachi on November 15, 1989.

India will travel to Ireland for two T20Is (June 26 and 28), followed by a five-match T20I series against England between July 1 and 11.

Shreyas has returned to the national T20 side for the first time after a match against Australia in Bengaluru on December 3, 2023.

"We have got a bit more time for the next WC, and his (Shreyas) performances as captain having won (the IPL) with KKR and a couple of good seasons with PBKS. He was very close to always being there in the team but could not find the spot," chief selector Ajit Agarkar told the media after announcing the squads for various tours.

Shreyas' impressive leadership credentials in the IPL



Shreyas Iyer



Vaibhav Sooryavanshi

— leading KKR to title in 2024 and PBKS to final in 2025 — along with two seasons of consistent outings with the bat prompted the selectors to zero in on the Mumbaikar to replace T20 World Cup 2026 winning captain Suryakumar. Agarkar said Suryakumar's dipping form over the last two seasons dictated their decision to remove the Mumbaikar

from the T20 captaincy.

Suryakumar not just lost the captaincy but also his place in the squad.

"You look at the form in the last two years but he was doing well as a captain (of India). We did not deliberate a lot but at some stage we were going to look ahead," Agarkar added.

Sooryavanshi's inclusion was a foregone conclusion af-

ter the 15-year-old bagged the Orange Cap in IPL 2026, scoring 776 runs with a hundred and five fifties at a strike rate of 237.30 for Rajasthan Royals.

Agarkar was impressed with the Bihar boy's game-changing abilities.

"We have seen what he can do. Even in the IPL we saw he almost single handedly carried his team.

"For a young kid to be batting in a high pressure environment, he can be a game changer. It's commendable," said the former India pacer.

Middle-order batter Tilak Varma will be Shreyas' deputy, while pacer Prince Yadav, who had an impressive season for Lucknow Super Giants, was drafted for the series against England and Ireland.

► **Shreyas Iyer, Page 7**
Bumrah, Hardik for longer formats, says Agarkar, Page 12

Domestic LPG price hiked by Rs 29 per 14.2 kg cylinder

NEW DELHI, PTI: Domestic

cooking gas LPG price has been raised by Rs 29 per cylinder, marking the second increase in three months as state-owned fuel retailers continue to grapple with elevated global energy costs.

The price of a 14.2-kg LPG cylinder in Delhi will rise to Rs 942 from Rs 913 with effect from June 7, according to industry sources.

The increase follows a Rs 60-per-cylinder hike on March 7 after the conflict in West Asia disrupted global energy supplies and drove up international fuel prices. Industry sources said that the increase had only partly offset losses incurred on domestic LPG sales.

State-run oil marketing companies were estimated to be losing about Rs 703 on every LPG cylinder sold be-

fore the latest revision, the sources said.

The LPG price hike comes amid a broader round of fuel price increases.

Petrol and diesel prices have been raised by a cumulative Rs 7.50 per litre since mid-May, while compressed natural gas (CNG) rates have increased by about Rs 6 per kg.

Despite the recent increases, oil companies continue to sell petrol and diesel below cost, incurring losses of around Rs 11 per litre on petrol and Rs 33.6 per litre on diesel, according to industry sources.

The government has so far avoided a full pass-through of higher international energy prices to consumers, absorbing part of the increase through state-owned fuel retailers.

State board students outdo CBSE candidates in CET

BENGALURU, DHNS

Students from colleges affiliated to the state's Department of Pre University Education outperformed those from the CBSE this year in the Karnataka Common Entrance Test (KCET) 2026.

A majority of the top 10 ranks in all the seven streams went to state board colleges. Of the first 10 in Engineering, nine are from the colleges affiliated to the state board followed by eight in Veterinary, nine in B.Sc Agriculture, eight in Nursing, eight in Yoga and Naturopathy, seven each in B Pharm and Pharm D.

During 2025, in Engineering, of the top 10 rank holders, seven were from CBSE and three from the Pre University board. This number was the same even in Veterinary and B.Sc Nursing. In Pharm D and B.Pharm, eight toppers were from the CBSE and two from state board colleges.

However, this year, of the top 100 engineering ranks, 81 were bagged by students from the state board colleges. According to experts, this is because of a dip in CBSE class 12 results this year to 83.29% from 88.39% last year.



Engineering topper
Tanisha Karthik



Veterinary topper
Nayana Gopi



Agriculture topper
Ninaad Vasisht

State board students in top 10	
Engineering	9
Veterinary	8
B.Sc Agriculture	9
Nursing	8
Yoga and Naturopathy	8
B.Pharm & Pharm D	7

The Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA) released the results on Saturday where 2,92,782 candidates were eligible for admissions to professional courses. Of these, 2,82,603 were eligible for engineering. Compared to the previous year, the number of students eligible for admissions to engineering courses has increased. In 2025, a total of 2,62,195 were eligible while

it was 2.75 lakh in 2024. This year, the number of seats available are also up by 5,000.

Tanisha Karthik of RV PU College, Jayanagar, topped in engineering while Nayana Gopi of BASE PU College, Shivanagar, topped Veterinary, Nursing, Yoga and Naturopathy, B.Pharm and Pharm D. In Agriculture, Ninaad Vasisht from RV PU College Jayanagar, was the topper.

Dr Sharan Prakash Patil, Minister for Medical Education, said counselling will begin from June 10. "We will not wait for NEET results. Because of the re-examination, NEET is delayed this year. We will do counselling for other courses," the minister said.

One grace mark was awarded in Physics and Chemistry. In Biology, both options for one question were considered.

Bahrain, Kuwait targeted by fresh Iran attacks

KUWAIT CITY, AFP: The Gulf countries of Bahrain and Kuwait were targeted in renewed aerial attacks by Iran early Saturday after the United States said it had struck the Islamic republic.

The tiny island kingdom of Bahrain, home to the headquarters of the US Fifth Fleet, denounced the attacks against its territory and neighbouring Kuwait.

Manama said the two Gulf countries intercepted seven missiles fired by Iran and described the attacks, the second against both nations in three days, as "blatant aggression" and "a flagrant violation of the sovereignty of both countries".

Kuwait also condemned the attacks, saying they were a "direct threat" to the "lives of citizens and residents" and represented a "dangerous es-

calation... at a time when the international community is making unremitting efforts to stop combat operations".

In the Bahrain capital, an AFP journalist reported hearing three explosions and the interior ministry announced air raid sirens had sounded across the country.

Later, Bahrain's military said in a statement it had been "able to intercept and destroy three missiles and a number of drones".

In Kuwait, an AFP journalist reported hearing repeated blasts near the country's international airport, which had been struck on Wednesday in an attack blamed on Iran that killed one person.

"We woke up to a huge explosion. The explosions were very loud," Reem, an Egyptian mother of two, told AFP, citing the attacks.

Bill seeks to end H-1B visa as green card route

WASHINGTON, PTI: A hardline Republican lawmaker has introduced a draft legislation in the US Congress seeking an overhaul of the H-1B visa programme, including ending its use as a pathway to permanent residency in the United States.

Congressman Chip Roy introduced the American White-Collar Worker Jobs Act on Thursday. The proposed legislation also seeks to scrap the optional practical training (OPT) programme, which allows foreign students to work in the US for a limited period after graduation.

"For its nearly forty-year history, the H-1B visa has been abused, allowing employers to sideline American STEM workers," said Roy.

Live-in partner kills lawyer's daughter, both booked

BENGALURU, DHNS

A 40-year-old realtor in Bengaluru has been arrested for allegedly murdering the five-year-old daughter of his live-in partner, who is absconding.

The accused, identified as Mohan G M, a resident of Seegehalli, was reportedly in a live-in relationship with the victim's mother, Priyanka, a lawyer. Preliminary investigations suggested the mother was unhappy with the child's complexion, the Kadugodi police said.

The child, Vennila, was found dead under suspicious circumstances on March 25. Initially, police registered a case of unnatural death. However, based on the findings of the post-mortem examination, a murder investigation was launched.

Police said Vennila was living with Priyanka in a villa in Seegehalli after the latter sought a divorce from her husband, Praveen. She had allegedly been living with Mohan, her college friend, for the past

few months.

Priyanka, an advocate, allegedly gave contradictory explanations regarding her daughter's death. In one version, she claimed Vennila fell ill after eating biryani. In another, she said the child had been left inside a car with the air-conditioner switched on while she was at a café.

Praveen later obtained the post-mortem report of his daughter and approached senior police officers, demanding a thorough probe.

Based on the report and Praveen's complaint, police registered a murder case against Priyanka and Mohan.

According to the post-mortem report, the girl sustained injuries consistent with physical assault. The report noted bleeding from the nose and the presence of blood clots in the abdomen, indicating internal injuries, a senior police officer said.

Mohan has been taken into police custody, while efforts are on to trace Priyanka. ► **Murder, Page 5B**



Mohan G M



CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke (C, right) shouts slogans during a protest over alleged irregularities in major examinations, in New Delhi, on Saturday. AFP

At first street protest, CJP sets deadline for Pradhan's resignation

NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) on Saturday vowed to intensify its protest by holding one next weekend if Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan fails to resign by then, as hundreds of students and quite a few parents and teachers joined the first street demonstration organised by the outfit here.

The online satirical platform-turned-protest movement's founder Abhijeet Dip-

ke flew down from Boston, US, and joined the 'Gen Z' demonstration at Jantar Mantar and was joined by activist Sonam Wangchuk among others, with the protesters expressing their anger over the issues in the education sector.

As they wound up the protest in the afternoon, Dipke set the deadline for Pradhan's resignation and said that they will return to the streets next Saturday if the minister does not resign over failures like the NEET-UG paper leak and

CBSE OSM row.

"I want to ask you who all will sit for a protest again. Do you want this protest to end? Do you think we should sit here till Dharmendra Pradhan resigns? On all your behalf, I am announcing that we will expand the protest across the country if he does not resign by 5 pm," he said.

► **CJP, Page 7**
Some forces trying to push youths towards 'negative politics': BJP chief Nitin Nabin, Page 8

OSM fallout: Parents pulling out class 11 students from CBSE schools, opt for state syllabus

BENGALURU, DHNS

A few CBSE schools in Bengaluru have seen class 11 students withdrawing their admissions.

They are attributing their decision to the recent fiasco over the new On Screen Marking (OSM) system.

At least two top CBSE schools confirmed that transfer certificates (TCs) had been issued to some students, considering their request. They are now likely to join pre-university courses that follow the state syllabus.

This year, the Central Board for Secondary Education (CBSE) introduced a digital



evaluation system for the first time for class 12 this year, basically the OSM system by digitising answer scripts for evaluation.

However, when the results were announced on May 13, thousands of students were shocked to see their results and complained about discrepancies in the marks awarded.

Many students and parents

even alleged that scanned copies of the answer scripts were blurry and marks were lower than expected when they applied for scanned copies. Some questions were not even evaluated, a few of them said.

Students said they failed in class 12 despite qualifying in competitive exams like JEE.

Even the dedicated portal launched a few days ago to facilitate access to answer scripts has reported technical glitches and students have complained that the portal is not opening.

According to school authorities, this has prompted some students and parents to withdraw admissions. ► **CBSE, Page 7**

FRAGRANCE FADES

Sandalwood cultivation drops as tree theft mounts

DH SPECIAL

NRUPATHUNGA S K
DAVANGERE, DHNS

Following a surge in sandalwood theft and weak enforcement, cultivation in Karnataka, the country's largest producer, has declined over the past two years.

Srinivasapur in Kolar district, which accounts for over 70% of sandalwood sapling supply, is set to distribute only about 40,000 seedlings this year, compared to around one lakh in 2023-24 and 2024-25.

According to official data, sandalwood is being grown on 4,699 hectares in 24 districts.

In 2001-02, the state government, for the first time, allowed farmers to grow sandalwood. Until then, they were naturally grown in forests and

on private land. Over the past two decades, farmers have cultivated sandalwood trees, but illegal felling has remained rampant in farmlands and forests.

In the past five years, 811 thefts were registered by the Forest Department and 417 by the police, says K Amaranarayana, president of the Akhila Karnataka Srigandha and Vana Krishi Belegarara Sangha. However, convictions were secured in only three police cases and none in Forest Department cases. He added that many growers and some officials are unaware of the proper procedure. As a result, complaints are often filed with the Forest Department instead of the police, leading to delays or a lack of progress in cases.

Despite initial enthusiasm, rising thefts and a lack of government support have discouraged growers from



taking up sandalwood cultivation. Dinesh Upparigenahalli, a grower from Chitradurga, said the Forest Department has neither consulted farmers nor ensured an adequate supply of quality seedlings.

He added that since sandalwood is not treated as a farm produce, growers are ineligible for crop loans and

government insurance schemes.

He pointed out that growers are forced to pay Rs 60-Rs 80 per seedling in private nurseries, compared to Rs 6 per seedling fixed by the department. There is also no official guidance on cultivation practices.

Principal Chief Conservator of Forests B P Ravi told *DH* that seedlings are given only to the registered growers. Many are not registered. Channagiri, Kolar, Kollegal, Shikaripur, Hassan and other regions are suitable for cultivation. Admitting that the conviction rate in sandalwood smuggling or illicit cutting cases is poor, he said, "We have no power to punish the guilty. Even complainants must follow-up cases."

Ashok Reddy, in charge of a sandalwood nursery said saplings from Srinivasapur are supplied to many districts.

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Praggu triumphs in Norway to make history

P12



2,823 acres
Total land marked for preliminary acquisition by the KIADB

13 villages
Notified by the KIADB for acquisition of land

6 crops a year
Number of premium silk cocoon harvests farmers comfortably achieve

10 plus pickup trucks
Minimum daily global export volume of coriander, beetroot and kohlrabi sent directly to KIA

Rs 40-50L
Top annual revenue generated by local farmers

Farmers resist land takeover in fertile silk hub

Chikkaballapur farmers anxious over tech park plan

FROM THE GROUND

ASHWIN B M SHIDLAGHATTA (CHIKKABALLAPUR DIST), DHNS



Farmers busy picking a fresh harvest of kohlrabi in their fields at Yannanguru village in Shidlaghatta, Chikkaballapur, on Saturday. DH PHOTO/ASHWIN B M

Agitation enters 82nd day

Farmers in Chikka-ballapur have been sitting in protest outside the DC's office for 82 days to protest the government's plan to acquire their lands. The farmers accused the local MLA of engineering a counter-narrative. **Details on Page 5B**

Amid a sprawling expanse of mango orchards, 'Bangalore blue' grape vineyards and mulberry plantations in Chikkaballapur district, disgruntlement is growing among farmers over the state government's plan to acquire their fertile land for a 'Deep Tech Park'.

Cultivators across 13 villages in Jangamakote hobli, Shidlaghatta taluk, fear the Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board's (KI-

ADB) project will permanently wipe out their self-sustaining, multi-crore rural economy in exchange for short-term monetary compensation.

When *DH* visited a few of the 13 notified villages, located around 30km from the Kempegowda International Airport, the landscape looked vibrant green. Local farmers say the entire area under notification is highly fertile. There is no vacant or barren land, they say. Instead, every single plot is

cultivated. Farmers grow horticultural crops such as mango, guava, grapes, cashews, ginger, vegetables and even apples, alongside widespread mulberry cultivation, which supports the region's vital sericulture sector.

According to farmer leaders, 70-80% of the landowners had submitted written objections to part with their lands during a survey by Special Land Acquisition officials.

Traditional agricultural

crops like ragi and jowar are also grown here. From these fields, farmers claim they earn lakhs of rupees, allowing them to remain independent.

The government plans to develop a major deep tech park in the region, focusing on sectors such as space, semiconductor technology, robotics, medical devices, electric vehicles, drones, high-tech electronics manufacturing, aerospace and defence.

► **Farmers, Page 7**

DISCARDED RESOURCE

K'taka blood banks in need of better practices

DH SPECIAL

SNEHA RAMESH BENGALURU, DHNS

Around 735 units of donated blood had to be discarded every week on an average in Karnataka in 2025-26 due to expiry of components, infections among donors and technical problems, according to data accessed by *DH*.

This is despite the state recording

Going waste			
Year	*Collected	*Discarded	Rate
2022-23	9,76,524	38,935	3.99%
2023-24	9,74,689	37,906	3.89%
2024-25	10,11,073	42,919	4.24%
2025-26	10,34,384	38,294	3.7%

*Units

around 5% increase in blood donation between 2022-23 and 2025-26.

According to the data, close to 3.7%

of the collected blood is being discarded, totaling 38,294 units.

Officials in the health department cited short shelf life of components like platelets and a lack of demand as the major reasons for discarding the donated units.

That apart, 0.2%-0.7% of the collected blood units are discarded as they test positive for infections such as HIV, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, syphilis and malaria.

► **Blood, Page 5B**

Quickly

Warrant issued against BJP MLA

A Bengaluru court has issued a non-bailable arrest warrant against Basavakalyan BJP MLA Sharanu Salagar in connection with a 2023 case. The case was registered against Salagar for creating ruckus in the house of a Muslim man, alleging cow slaughter.

Details on Page 5B



Edible oils: Centre sets pack sizes

The Department of Consumer Affairs has mandated standard pack sizes for edible oils and fats to help consumers compare prices more easily and make informed choices. The new norms prescribe nine standard sizes: 200 ml/g, 500 ml/g, 1L/kg, 2L/kg, 3L/kg, 4L/kg, 5L/kg, 15L/kg and 20L/kg. These apply to edible oils like sunflower, groundnut, among others.

Panel to review garbage contract

In a significant development in the Rs 39,437-crore garbage contract, the government has formed a panel to examine the tender terms after the Finance Department red-flagged the tendering process. **Details on Page 3**

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Sanctions threat to India would boomerang: Putin

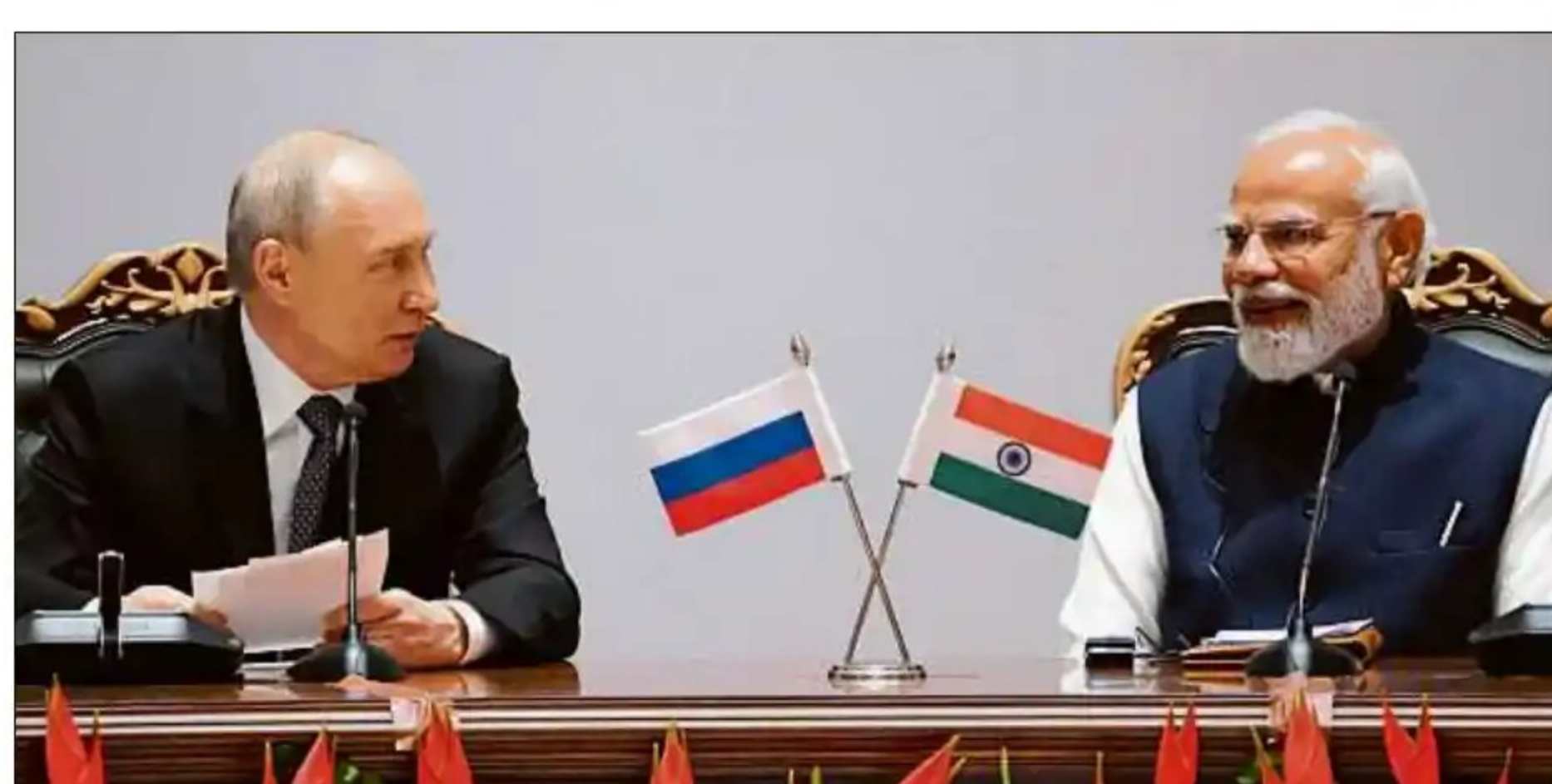
Says cooperation with Delhi not subject to political environment

ST PETERSBURG, PTI

Russian President Vladimir Putin has said any attempt to undermine India's sovereignty through "threats of sanctions" would "boomerang immediately" under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership.

Putin made these remarks at the annual St Petersburg International Economic Forum on Friday in response to a question about his comments during an interaction with heads of leading global news agencies on Thursday night.

"India always acts as a sovereign country, and under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi, any potential threats of



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Russian President Vladimir Putin at a plenary session of the India-Russia Trade Forum in New Delhi. AP/PTI FILE PHOTO

sanctions would boomerang immediately," Putin said.

Putin said that he has been in close talks with Modi for a long period, while recalling the time when the Indian leader was banned from entering the US.

"I know PM Modi will never forget about it," Putin said. "Now that he is (the) prime minister, all the sanctions have been eliminated, and the relationship between the US and India is developing successfully as far as I understand."

Asked about the possibility of India facing US sanctions

if it were to acquire Russian defence systems such as the Su-57 aircraft or the S-500 air defence platform, Putin said, "India is a sovereign country, and it is free to choose those products that they consider to be most up to date and most applicable for them and obviously offering the best price. No matter what people say, India has always been acting in this manner."

"India is always guided by its national interests," he added.

Putin said that Russia's cooperation with India, just like with

all other partners, is not subject to the political environment.

"We can't be dictated... Nobody can dictate to us, and nobody would even try to do that. We are always going to do what we consider to be right, and we will always stand true to the commitments given to partners, especially partners like India," he said.

Highlighting Russia's long-standing relationship with India, especially in the area of defence, Putin said, "Our relations with the Indian friends are specific, thanks to our mutual trust. We concentrate not just on trade. Not just on buying and selling, we're also concentrating on joint research and development."

Putin highlighted how experts from both countries are working on the design of the mid-range missile BrahMos.

For decades, Russia has served as India's primary defence supplier. However, supply chain disruptions stemming from the war in Ukraine have forced New Delhi to diversify its procurement strategy.

UP minister fears waning votebank over Ghazipur 'encounter'

SANJAY PANDEY
LUCKNOW, DHNS

The Uttar Pradesh minister and president of Nishad Party, Sanjay Nishad, on Saturday sought to corner his own government over the recent "encounter" of one Kamlesh Bind, who was an accused in the murder of Vineet Rai, a businessman in Ghazipur district.

Nishad, whose party is a BJP ally in the state and has a strong support of the Bind community, said Bind's "encounter" was "fake" and demanded an investigation.

Nishad said the police action could drive away Bind supporters from NDA. "Bind community members are in sizeable numbers in Ghazipur, Jaunpur... we should realise that we lost many Lok Sabha seats which are close to Varanasi in 2024 LS polls", he added.

Varanasi is the Parliamentary constituency of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Rai was killed on May 29. Police gunned down one of the murder accused, Bind, in an alleged encounter in the district on Thursday.

While the police claimed that Bind was shot after he opened fire at a police team, his wife alleged that the cops assaulted him and later took him to an undisclosed place.

The Opposition parties have attacked the state government over encounters alleging that the police were "targeting" people of "specific communities".

India, Nepal stress 'special' ties, push for stronger engagement

Talks cover trade, energy, connectivity and development cooperation

NEW DELHI, PTI

India and Nepal share "special" ties, and there is an opportunity to "decisively" shift the engagement to realise its full potential, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Saturday during a meeting with his Nepalese counterpart Shishir Khanal.

The two ministers vowed to take bilateral ties to "new heights" while reviewing the full spectrum of the relations, covering development cooperation, connectivity, trade and transit, energy, and people-to-people ties, according to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). Khanal also held talks with National Security Advisor Ajit Doval.

Khanal kicked off a three-day trip to New Delhi on Friday, a visit overshadowed by a rag-



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in a meeting with Nepal Foreign Minister Shishir Khanal in New Delhi on Saturday. PTI

ing controversy triggered by Nepalese Prime Minister Balendra Shah's recent remarks on the boundary row between the two sides.

Delving into various aspects of the ties, he reiterated Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "sentiment regarding India's commitment to working with Nepal for mutual prosperity, progress and well-being of the two countries".

In his comments at the meeting, Khanal said Nepal accords "highest priority" to its relationship with India, and Kathmandu is ready to engage "substantively and purposefully" with New Delhi.

Nepal is important for India in the context of its overall strategic interests in the region, and leaders of the two countries have often noted the age-old "Roti Beti" relationship.

Following the meeting, Jaishankar virtually handed over 72 health facilities and 12 cultural heritage projects completed under India's post-2015 earthquake reconstruction assistance to Nepal. The two ministers also jointly launched the linkage between India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and Nepal's National Payments Interface (NPI) to facilitate personal remittances between the two countries.

India slams Pak for 'unwarranted' J&K reference at UN

UNITED NATIONS, PTI: India has slammed Pakistan for its "unwarranted reference" to Jammu and Kashmir at the UN, telling the current non-permanent member of the global body that it was a huge responsibility and not a forum for peddling "biased and false narratives".

"The unwarranted reference by Pakistan to a matter strictly internal to India, the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, has compelled me to respond," India's Permanent Representative

to the UN Ambassador Parvathaneni Harish said on Friday. The strong retort by Harish came after Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad raised the issue of J&K in his remarks in the UN General Assembly on Friday.

Harish said in the UNGA hall that Pakistan has decided not to spare this forum either from their characteristic misuse of august UN platforms for their divisive political interests.

'BJP deal' row: CPM questions Cong ahead of I.N.D.I.A meet

SHEMIN JOY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

CPM General Secretary MA Baby has written to Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, asking him to clear the air regarding his party's accusation that the Left party has a "deal" with the BJP, as such "canards" strike at the very basis of the unity forged through the I.N.D.I.A bloc against the BJP.

Baby's letter on June 5 came as Congress General Secretary (Organisation) KC Venugopal reached out to him, inviting him to the I.N.D.I.A meeting on Monday. However, he made it clear that the CPM will fully cooperate with the I.N.D.I.A bloc to fight against the BJP, as it would never be found wanting in this task, "despite all the attacks and distortions" by the Congress.

Sources indicated Baby may skip the meeting but would send a party representative to attend it. Baby told Kharge that there was a "systematic campaign" by the Congress, accusing Vijayan of striking a deal with the prime minister to save himself from Enforcement Di-

rectorate action in a case.

"These were not stray remarks made in the heat of an election campaign but were the centrepiece of your political campaign," he said in the letter, also shared with other I.N.D.I.A bloc parties.

He recalled that the I.N.D.I.A bloc was set up as a "broad platform to politically fight the BJP and parties of 'diverse ideologies and programmes who otherwise are electoral rivals in many states' came together for the 'sole purpose' of fighting the BJP.

Baby said the CPM had worked "sincerely" to see such a united platform emerge from the first meeting in Patna in June 2023, but "strangely, the CPM is accused of having a deal with the BJP". "This strikes at the very basis of the unity forged against the BJP," he said.

He said Rahul has repeatedly called for ED action against Vijayan and wondered whether this can be termed an anti-BJP stance or was it a case of inviting the government to take "illegal punitive action" against a fellow Opposition leader.

Goa: Student dies after online trolling, FIR over viral video

PANAJI, PTI: A 23-year-old college student allegedly shot himself dead near Mapusa town of North Goa as he faced online trolling after his video of dumping garbage by the roadside went viral and also attracted legal action, police has said.

The victim, Samuel Garvin de Braganca, killed himself on Thursday night in the bathroom of his house, a senior police official said.

Chief Minister Pramod Sawant directed the police to conduct an in-depth investigation into the matter.

Talking to reporters on Friday, Samuel's family members said he went into depression after being trolled on social media over the video.

A video of him dumping a garbage bag at the roadside was shot by a person, who later posted it on a social media platform, they said.

A complaint was also filed against Samuel over his act at

the Mapusa police station, the family members added.

A senior police official said an FIR was booked against Samuel under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) section 271 (negligent acts likely to spread infection of a disease dangerous to life) of and also under the Goa Biodegradable Garbage Control Act.

Samuel was also called to the police station and was issued a notice under relevant provisions of the law, he said.

After Samuel shot himself, his family rushed him to a hospital in Mapusa where he was declared dead last night, the police said.

After his death, the family members demanded the arrest of the person who had shot the video and posted it on social media.

(If you are in distress or having suicidal tendencies, please reach out to these 24/7 helplines: KIRAN 1800-599-0019 or Arogya Sahayavani at 104 for help)

More than satellite offices

Beyond Bengaluru: PROMISE vs REALITY

• **The Beyond Bengaluru Mission**, led by the Karnataka Digital Economy Mission (KDEM), was launched in 2020 to promote inclusive and distributed growth of the digital economy beyond the state capital

• **Six clusters** have been identified under the Beyond Bengaluru initiative, with Mysuru, Mangaluru and Hubballi–Dharwad–Belagavi being the key growth clusters

IT sector growth in Tier-2 cities

Over **165** new companies established

25 business expansions facilitated

1,200+ recognised startups operating

15+ GCCs launched

More than **Rs 3,200 cr** invested in manufacturing

Over **24 lakh sqft** of IT infrastructure developed

• Between 2021–22 and 2024–25, the six key Beyond Bengaluru clusters created over **5,600 jobs**, while Bengaluru alone employed over 10 lakh technology professionals in 2025

The growth paradox

• Of the **1,423 projects** cleared by the State High Level Clearance Committee and the State Level Single Window Clearance Committee between 2023–24 and 2025–26, over **50%** were concentrated in just four districts – Bengaluru Urban, Bengaluru Rural, Kolar and Tumakuru

• No city in **Karnataka** features among India's 10 **fastest-growing** Tier-2 IT hubs while Bengaluru continues to top the list of the country's leading technology centres

Only 7.3% projects, 12.5% investments materialised

Year	Industrial projects approved outside Bengaluru	Industrial projects implemented outside Bengaluru	Proposed investment (In Rs lakh cr)	Investment materialised (In Rs lakh cr)
2020-21	249	48	0.4	0.1
2021-22	407	42	0.3	0.08
2022-23	519	42	2.9	0.4
2023-24	315	15	0.5	0.03
2024-25	313	3	0.2	0.01
2025-26	246	1	0.4	0.0003
2026-27	12	-	0.1	-
Total	2061	151	4.8	0.6

Projected jobs **4.7 lakh**
Jobs created **76,933**

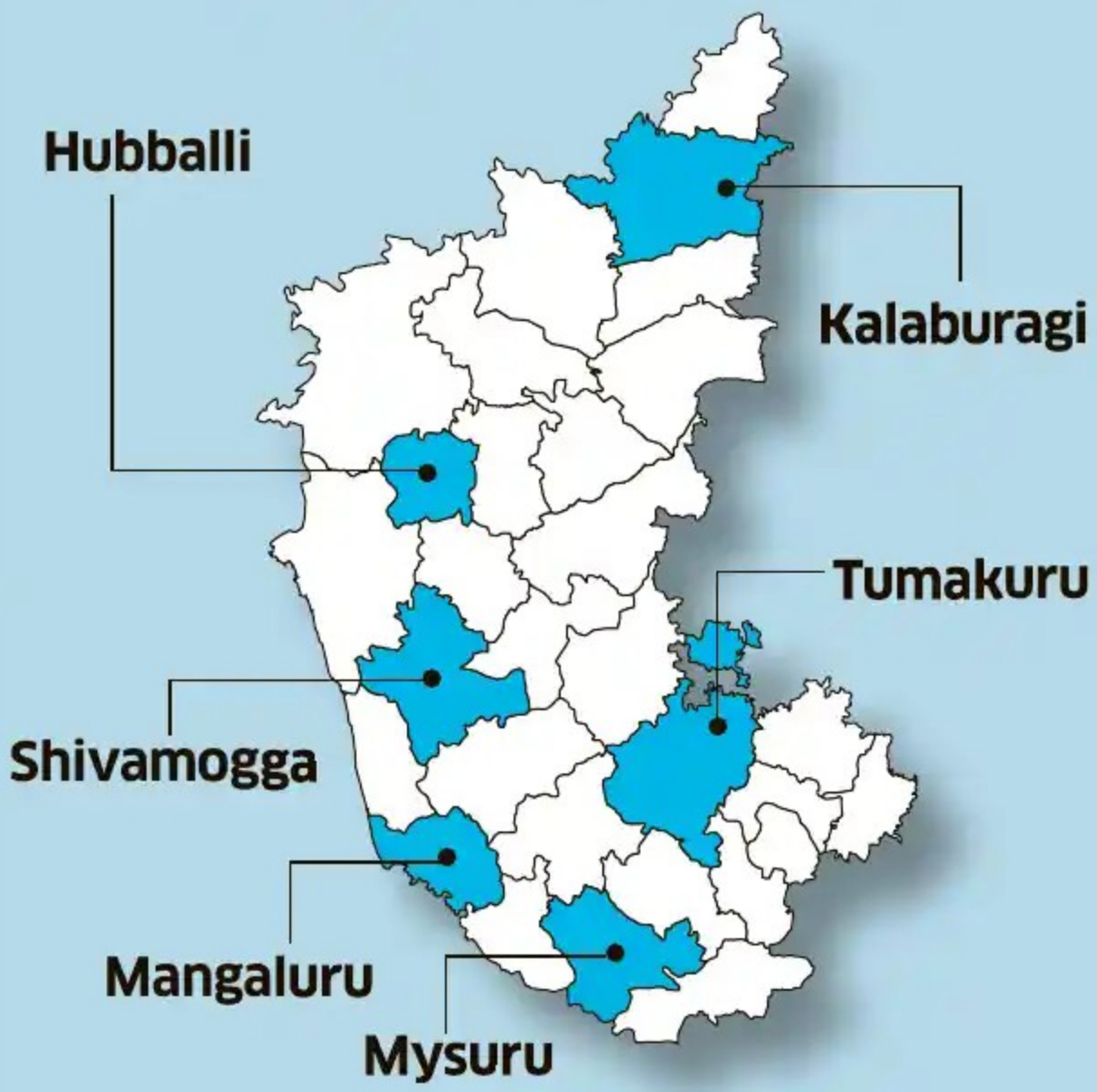
Expanding industrial ecosystem in Southern Tier-2 cities

Tamil Nadu: Namakkal: Key poultry and egg-production hub. **Thoothukudi:** Emerging centre for green and electronics investments. **Tiruchirappalli, Coimbatore, Madurai and Vellore:** Hotspot for GCCs

Andhra Pradesh: Anantapur: EV manufacturing and charging infrastructure centre. **Kurnool:** Heavy industry and manufacturing hotspot. **Sri City, Koppalparthy and Hindupur:** Electronics hub. **Visakhapatnam:** Key base for pharma and IT firms

Maharashtra: Pune and Nashik: Technology magnets. **'New Nagpur':** A futuristic high-tech city. **Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar (Aurangabad):** Automobile and engineering growth centres. **Kolhapur and Solapur:** Key node for manufacturing and services sector

Beyond Bengaluru clusters



Cluster-wise IT/ITeS growth

Mysuru

- 11 new companies launched
- 6 companies expanded operations
- 440+ DPIIT registered startups
- 50+ IT companies set up

Mangaluru

- 16 new companies launched
- 3 companies expanded operations
- 250+ tech companies, including around 200 startups and 12+ operational GCCs

Hubballi–Dharwad–Belagavi

- 480+ startups
- 3,400+ SMEs
- Major firms include Aegis, Tata Motors, Tata Hitachi, Sankalp, iMerit, and Vividsparks

Sources: IT Dept, Commerce & Industries Dept, KDEM, Analytics Insight, media reports

Compiled by: Divyashri Mudakavi and Uma Kannan DH Graphics: Guru Prasath R

Beyond Bengaluru, from P1

According to data from the industries department, only 13% of the proposed Rs 4,75,991 crore investments has materialised, amounting to Rs 60,257 crore across 151 projects.

Experts say the programme requires a longer timeframe to achieve scale. Kamal Karanth, Co-founder of Xpheno, a specialist staffing firm, says, “Beyond Bengaluru needs a 10-year horizon, not instant comparison. Bengaluru became what it became over a few decades of incremental movements.”

Sam Cherian Kumbukattu, founder chairman of Mysuru-based Schevaran Laboratories, says businesses need to be located where economic activity is concentrated. He says enterprises require easy access to talent, housing, infrastructure and other essential facilities. “For a businessman to come to Mysuru and start an industry, there must be ease of doing business. Land should be made available, people should also be willing to work in Mysuru,” says Kumbukattu, who is also vice chairman of CII Karnataka.

“The government is proactive, but the need is more than what is available because Bengaluru is attracting attention from across the world due to its cosmopolitan nature. This needs to be extended to other cities,” he adds.

Talent data backs this. The Silicon Beach Skills initiative, led by the Karnataka Digital Economy Mission (KDEM) and Xpheno, analyses the region's potential to drive growth in India's digital economy and identifies a 300-km coastal “Talent Triangle” stretching from Karwar in the north to Mangaluru and Udupi in the south, and eastwards to Hosadurga, including parts of Kerala.

The Karnataka zones of the Talent Triangle have a potential talent pool of 3.1 lakh people, of whom 2.4 lakh are in the accessible active talent pool. However, recruiters face a shortage of experienced professionals, with only 90,000 having at least one year of work experience. The rest comprise freshers and entry-level talent, many of whom leave the region to begin their careers elsewhere.

Mangaluru and Udupi have emerged as the region's key talent hubs, accounting for nearly three-fourths of the active experienced white-collar workforce.

“For the Hubballi-Belagavi, Mangaluru, Mysuru and Shivamogga regions to grow, the starting point has to be in infrastructure, which remains the biggest bottleneck,” Kamal says. “Improved road networks, faster

and more frequent rail services and better air connectivity are essential. This must be followed by investments in physical infrastructure such as Grade A office spaces, higher education institutions and quality healthcare facilities.”

Infra gaps

Industry experts point out that infrastructure gaps continue to pose challenges. Smitha Hemmigae, Chief Market Officer, ANSR, said that while the supply of Grade A office space in Mysuru and Mangaluru has improved in recent years, it remains limited compared to Bengaluru. As a result, enterprises often face longer lead times in securing ready-to-occupy, plug-and-play office spaces.

Senior talent relocation remains the most cited friction point, with professionals established in Bengaluru often reluctant to move to cities with fewer premium lifestyle and schooling options.

“The hub-plus-one model addresses this pragmatically. Keep leadership in Bengaluru, build specialised teams locally in Beyond Bengaluru cities,” Hemmigae says.

However, Melligeri believes that industry needs to go to hinterlands where people are residing. A presence in a tier-II city for any business should not be a satellite office. It must be a core operation with a scalable plan for the long-term. “Most importantly, you need to have a critical mass of people, and the support of an ecosystem that covers the entire value chain,” he says.

Talent moves only when regions offer multiple employment opportunities. In 2024, after Industries Minister MB Patil warned that land allotted to Infosys in Hubballi could be reclaimed if underutilised, the company announced incentives of up to Rs 8 lakh for employees willing to relocate there. In August 2025, Infosys further expanded its Hubballi presence by launching a centre for AI, cybersecurity and space technology, taking its workforce in the city past 1,000 employees.

On whether companies should offer relocation incentives, KDEM CEO Sanjeev Gupta says that several firms, including IBM, have scaled organically in Mysuru without special packages. He notes that Karnataka's GCC (Global Capability Centers) Policy supports employee relocation by covering shifting expenses and subsidising employers' EPF contributions, reducing costs for both companies and employees and making moves to cities such as Tumakuru, Kalaburagi, Hubballi and Mysuru more viable.

Karnataka IT-BT Minister Priyank Kharge acknowledges that investment de-

Execution gaps hit tech ambitions

PAVAN KUMAR H
HUBBALLI, DHNS

Industry experts in North Karnataka say the ‘Beyond Bengaluru’ initiative has largely remained on paper, with a wide gap between policy announcements and outcomes on the ground. They argue that most tier-II cities still lack the ecosystem to thrive, including access to venture capital, experienced founders, angel investors, skilled talent and large anchor companies. Infrastructure gaps have also limited the expansion of major firms beyond Bengaluru.

Ashok Shettar, Pro-Chancellor of KLE Technological University, Hubballi, says while multiple governments have publicised the initiative, there is hardly any visibility on the ground.

“Hubballi-Dharwad and Belagavi have quality educational institutions and a growing start-up culture, but the ecosystem is still evolving. Companies seek assurance that they can scale operations, recruit experienced talent and retain employees over the long term,” he says.

Hubballi-Dharwad has five incubation centres, yet few startups have scaled into large businesses due to

limited market opportunities.

Ashok Shettar, who was also Chairman of the Karnataka R&D Policy Task Force, says the time has come to diversify in IT. Each region should be developed keeping in mind that IT will soon influence the manufacturing sector.

Despite the state government announcing and establishing IT parks in several cities, the results have been mixed. While Mysuru and Mangaluru have attracted IT firms, many of the parks in other cities either remain underutilised or have been diverted to non-IT uses.

Belagavi Technology Companies Association (BeTCA) president R K Patil says the IT park on the outskirts of Belagavi has failed to attract investment due to poor infrastructure. “I had purchased half an acre of land in the IT park, but returned it because there are no proper roads, bus connectivity or supporting infrastructure,” he says.

Patil says bureaucratic red tape is another major hurdle for the 40-odd IT companies operating in Belagavi and entrepreneurs looking to set up startups there. Tier-II cities do not have a single-window clearance system, forcing firms to navigate multiple

departments, endure long approval delays and deal with cumbersome compliance requirements.

BeTCA founding member Hitesh Dharmdasani says another challenge is the Bengaluru-centric approach to planning and decision-making.

“The lack of incentives too has forced tier-II cities to compete with Bengaluru for investments and talent, instead of complementing it as satellite hubs,” he adds.

Santosh Nargund, who led the #StartInfosysHubli campaign, says North Karnataka has the potential to become a major technology hub, but companies look beyond land and policy announcements. “We need better branding, improved urban infrastructure, closer industry-government coordination and sustained policy implementation support on ground to attract both companies and talent,” he says.

A citizens' campaign played a key role in operationalising the Infosys campus in Hubballi. Yet, basic infrastructure remained a challenge. “Even securing a dedicated bus service and a bus shelter for the campus was difficult,” says an employee.

decisions are also influenced by where talent can live and work better — with less congestion, shorter commutes and a more balanced lifestyle. “Our continued focus on infrastructure, digital connectivity, and talent development is strengthening these ecosystems, helping decongest Bengaluru while creating high-quality employment opportunities across the state. We will continue to build on this momentum through proactive policy support, faster clearances and industry partnerships,” Priyank says.

Late action led to slow start

The state government started focusing on beyond tier-I cities much later compared to states such as Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra.

“It takes a decade to set up an ecosystem. After identifying districts and local advantage, the government needs to incentivise and also develop the talent that is required for the industry,” J Murugavel, Vice Chairman, CII Tamil Nadu State

Council said, adding that Tamil Nadu houses 50 SIPCOT (State Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamil Nadu) industrial parks spread across 24 districts. Citing Tamil Nadu's example, Murugavel said Namakkal evolved into a leading poultry and egg-production hub, while Coimbatore emerged as a manufacturing powerhouse. GCCs have also expanded into cities such as Tiruchirappalli and Madurai. Sustained growth, he adds, hinges on nurturing and retaining local talent.

Apart from Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur, Maharashtra is expanding its industrial projects in emerging regions such as Nashik, Solapur and Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar (Aurangabad).

Andhra Pradesh is aggressively developing its tier-II and tier-III cities. Anantapur is attracting major EV manufacturing and charging infrastructure, while Kurnool is being positioned as a centre for heavy industry and manufacturing. With strategic hubs such as Sri City, Koppalparthy and Hindupur, the state has identified

growth centres across its regions and is actively building sector-specific ecosystems around them.

“All cities should have uniform growth. Andhra Pradesh is already going in that direction. The state has pharma, IT and technology-oriented industries in Visakhapatnam. Tirupati is transforming into an electronics hub,” S Narendra Kumar, Chairman, CII Andhra Pradesh State Council, says.

The government is taking these steps to avoid repeating the concentration of growth seen in Bengaluru, he adds.

While significant challenges remain, the government is steadily pushing ahead with initiatives aimed at decentralising growth and creating strong technology ecosystems beyond the capital. Sanjeev Gupta says Karnataka aims for at least 10% of its IT exports — currently exceeding Rs 5.5 lakh crore — to originate from Beyond Bengaluru clusters by 2030, signalling a long-term shift towards a more geographically distributed technology economy.

Private sector push drives Mangaluru's IT rise

HARSHA
MANGALURU, DHNS

Mangaluru is often cited as Karnataka's most promising destinations for IT and Global Capability Centres (GCC).

Industry leaders say while Beyond Bengaluru set the tone, it was private companies that took a leap of faith and invested in the city ahead of any concrete government support.

Rohith Bhat, a regional entrepreneur and founder of Mangaluru-based Wrk-wrk, who helped attract several IT firms to the city, said the government has to do a lot more if it is serious about developing regional technology hubs into strong alternative destinations.

“It requires sustained effort and convincing larger firms to diversify their areas of operation,” he said, adding that private players can facilitate this by building IT infra and co-working spaces.

According to him, around IT 40 companies have set up their offices in Mangaluru over two years. Private sector investments in three years have helped double employment opportunities from 15,000 to 30,000. The sector has also created over 5,000 co-working seats, a figure expected to double over the next three years.

Entruppy's Head of People Operations, Vishal Kanchan, says he had long wanted to establish a presence in Mangaluru. Drawn by the Silicon Beach Programme's (SBP) BaseCamp initiative, which helps IT firms set up operations, Entruppy launched an office in Mangaluru in September 2025. “The response was encouraging, and we have since grown to a team of more than 40 employees,” Vishal said.

The growth trajectory

The growth of technology ecosystem in the coastal districts began with Infosys's software development centre in Kottara. The ecosystem expanded when the Karnataka Digital Economy Mission (KDEM) facilitated the launch of around 50 startups under the ‘Beyond Bengaluru Start-Up Grid’.

It was further driven by initiatives such as TIEs (The Indus Entrepreneurs), Silicon Beach Programme (SBP), KDEM's Mangaluru cluster (covering Dakshina Kannada, Udupi, Uttara Kannada and Kodagu districts), and Vertex Workspaces' business expansion efforts.

“Now, the region's tech ecosystem includes over 400 start-ups, more than 250 technology companies and over 25,000 professionals,” added Rohith who is also the convener of SBP.

KDEM's Mangaluru Data Centre Feasibility Study 2025 identified Mangaluru as one of India's most cost-efficient and scalable destinations for data centre development. The region offers land leasing at Rs 7.69 per sq ft per month, providing a 4–5x cost advantage over Mumbai and up to 95% savings compared to Chennai.

Energy tariffs of Rs 5.95–Rs 6.6/kWh are also lower than Chennai's Rs 7.50, giving the region a clear cost edge over most major markets, the report noted.

SBP's 10-year vision aims to promote start-ups, attract satellite companies and create up to two lakh jobs within a few years, said Rohith. The government has also announced an IT park (1.5 lakh sq ft plinth area) at Derebail, a Centre of Excellence in fintech, and a data lab, with KDEM set to conduct a feasibility study.

Have your say

To express your opinion, e-mail us at: insight@deccanherald.co.in

Clean energy, from P1

Renewable energy must be backed by R&D in critical areas

Second, the government's intention to lower the dependence on environmentally unsustainable thermal power, much of which is generated using fossil fuels such as coal.

Yet, thermal power continues to dominate India's energy mix. According to the Central Electricity Authority's (CEA) Renewable Generation Report for April 2026, around 73% of the electricity generated during the month came from thermal sources. Renewable energy accounted for less than 25%, with solar contributing only around 13%.

According to NITI Aayog, fossil fuels — coal, oil and gas — account for about 47% of India's total installed power generation capacity of 537 GW. Solar power, the largest source among renewables, accounts for 29%.

So why isn't solar power contributing more to actual generation? The answer lies in a combination of factors, including gaps in transmission infrastructure, inadequate energy storage capacity and anomalies in electricity markets.

Electricity generated at power plants is first fed into the transmission network, the high-voltage lines carried by the large pylons seen across the country, before reaching consumers through local distribution systems. However, the transmission network, which takes far longer to build than solar power projects, has struggled to keep pace with the rapid expansion of generation capacity and, by extension, demand.

According to Charith Konda, energy specialist at the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA), transmission lines can take up to five years to build, while solar farms are today being set up at a breakneck speed of 18–24 months.

The consequences of this mismatch are already becoming evident. According to Ember, a London-based global energy think tank, India had to curtail 300 gigawatt-hours (GWh) of renewable energy during the first quarter (January–March) of 2026 due to transmission constraints. This accounted for nearly two-thirds of the

total curtailment across the national grid.

In a report published last month, Ember warned: “This growing mismatch between fast-moving solar projects and slower-moving transmission infrastructure is now the most critical operational risk to the country's 2030 target of 500 gigawatts (GW) of non-fossil electricity.”

It is generally quicker and more economical to curtail solar power generation than to scale down thermal power plants.

The transmission bottlenecks are now being addressed by the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC) through regulatory measures. One such initiative is the General Network Access (GNA) framework, which seeks to strengthen the vision of “One Nation, One Grid” by expanding transmission infrastructure for all sources of electricity, including renewable energy.

Storage challenges

Battery energy storage systems (BESS) have emerged as a viable option for optimising electricity generation and con-

sumption, particularly by storing solar power generated during the day and supplying it during periods of peak evening demand. However, India continues to lag in developing large-scale energy storage capacity.

According to industry estimates, India's demand for advanced chemistry cell (ACC) batteries stood at 28 GWh in 2025, with battery electric vehicles (BEVs) accounting for roughly 60% and stationary or grid-scale storage making up the remaining 40%.

In contrast, the country's domestic cell manufacturing capacity is currently only about 4 GWh. According to projections by IEEFA and JMK Research, India will need to expand this capacity at a compound annual growth rate of 36.5% to reach around 272 GWh by FY2030.

Demand is expected to rise even further, crossing 700 GWh by the mid-2040s, when India aims to achieve developed-country status. However, domestic manufacturing capacity continues to lag

behind demand, leaving the country heavily reliant on imports, particularly from China.

Charith Konda said while India has rightly embarked on plans to build huge renewable energy capacity to reduce dependence on imported fuels like crude oil and coal, we have simply replaced them with imports of expensive battery cells. He added that the country is also not investing enough in research and development in critical areas like ACC.

Rooftop solar

Over the past decade, rooftop solar installations across residential and commercial segments have also recorded impressive growth. From less than 3 GW around 10 years ago, India's rooftop solar capacity had expanded to 23.5 GW by March this year, aided in no small measure by centrally funded programmes like the PM Surya Ghar Yojana.

Experts, however, say that the sector's growth potential is far greater than cur-

rent levels suggest. They point to two key constraints: the uneven implementation of net metering, which allows households and businesses to sell surplus electricity back to the grid, and the availability of heavily subsidised or free electricity provided by various state governments.

Today, India is the world's third-largest renewable energy market, behind China and the United States, in terms of installed capacity. Yet nearly 70% of its electricity generation still comes from fossil fuel-fired power plants, highlighting the gap between capacity creation and actual energy transition.

Unless India addresses constraints such as inadequate transmission infrastructure, limited energy storage capacity, continued dependence on imported battery cells and the uneven implementation of net metering, its remarkable expansion in renewable energy capacity will not realise its full potential.

(Kalyan Subramani is a Bengaluru-based writer)

Govt forms panel to review Rs 39,437-cr garbage contract

Finance dept flags cost escalation, vendor lock-in

NAVEEN MENEZES
BENGALURU, DHNS

In a significant development in the controversial Rs 39,437-crore garbage contract, the Karnataka government has constituted a high-level committee to examine the tender terms after the Finance Department red-flagged various aspects of the tendering exercise. The decision also marks a change of mind by the government, days after the state cabinet approved the project.

On May 25, *DH* had reported that the cabinet had cleared the proposal despite stern warnings from its own Finance Department over inflated costs, steep annual escalations and a long-

term lock-in period with a single concessionaire. The project pertains to the processing and disposal of the city's 5,200 tonnes of waste for the next 30 years.

According to a government order issued on June 4, the committee has been tasked with scrutinising the procurement process, tender conditions and related procedures adopted for the mega project.

The four-member committee includes Anjum Parvez, Additional Chief Secretary, Forest, Environment and Ecology; Dr P C Jaffer, Secretary, Finance Department; and a Chief Engineer of the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA). M Maheshwar Rao, Chief Commissioner of the GBA, will be the member



Managing Bengaluru's daily waste remains a costly civic challenge. DH FILE PHOTO

secretary.

The panel has been asked to examine in detail all the aspects red-flagged by the Finance Department and submit its report to the government within seven days.

In its note, the Finance Department had raised four strong objections to the proposal when the Urban Development Department (UDD) placed it before the state cabinet. These included the inflated cost of the contract. While the government had estimated the project cost at Rs 33,047 crore, the bidder had quoted Rs 39,437 crore, which is Rs 6,390 crore more than the government estimate.

Secondly, the Finance Department flagged the annual

escalation clause of 5% built into the agreements for the next 30 years. "With 5% compounding, at the end of 30 years the base rate would have become almost four-and-a-half times greater than the present rate," the department warned, effectively projecting a 430% increase in rates over the concession period.

The department had also cautioned that the contracts would create a "vendor lock-in" situation, especially because both packages had been awarded to the same concessionaire, giving one private player control over a major portion of Bengaluru's waste management ecosystem for three decades.

The department also questioned the need for such a long concession period when the government itself was providing land for the facilities and the private investments involved were not exceptionally high. It recommended reducing the contract duration from 30 years to 10 years and limiting the annual escalation to 2.5%.

Compassion takes centre stage at St John's convocation

BENGALURU, DHNS

St John's Medical College on Saturday celebrated its 59th Annual Undergraduate Convocation, awarding degrees to 150 health professionals.

The graduating batch achieved a 100% pass rate, with five students securing nine university ranks under the Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences (RGUHS).

Among the top achievers, Akshay Ajoy secured the overall ninth rank in the Phase 3 Part 2 MBBS examination, besides securing the fourth rank in Community Medicine, fourth rank in General Medi-



Graduating doctors take the Hippocratic Oath at St John's Medical College's 59th Annual Undergraduate Convocation in Bengaluru on Saturday.

cine and seventh rank in General Surgery.

Other rank-holders included Ananya Varshney, who secured the seventh rank in Pharmacology and eighth rank in Gener-

al Surgery; Rachel Ranjan, who secured the eighth rank in Community Medicine and eighth rank in Paediatrics; Suzanne Mary Stephen, who secured the eighth rank in Mi-

crobiology; and Zainab Fathima, who secured the ninth rank in ENT.

Delivering the convocation address, chief guest Rev Dr Jose C C, Vice Chancellor of Christ (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru, called upon the new graduates to ground their practice in deep empathy.

Quoting a 15th-century guiding maxim for healers, he said, "Cure sometimes, relieve often, comfort always."

He reminded the young doctors that while medical science may have its limits in finding a definitive cure, the responsibility to provide relief and compassionate comfort to patients remains absolute and constant.

Shop owner booked for poisoning dogs

BENGALURU, DHNS: Mico Layout police have registered a case against a shop owner on suspicion of poisoning and killing two stray dogs in Vijaya Bank Layout.

The police said two individuals run neighbouring shops in the area, where a local resident regularly fed stray dogs. Feeding the dogs had allegedly led to disputes between the shop owners. On June 1, two dogs, including a pup, were found dead.

After being informed about the incident, animal welfare activist Varsha Anjanappa lodged a complaint and alleged that the accused, who runs a chicken shop, may have mixed rat poison with meat and fed it to the dogs. Seven dogs had allegedly consumed the meat, of which two died while five survived, Varsha alleged. Police said they are waiting for the FSL report to investigate the case further.

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◆ IN THE CITY ◆

GENERAL
World Environment Day: Karnataka Jnana Vijnana Samithi; Freedom Park, Gandhinagar; 8 am.
Scholarship Distribution: Vasudev K Aatre to be the chief guest; Vijayalakshmi Deshmane to preside; Sarthaka Shikshana Charitable Trust; Pai Viceroy Hotel, Jayanagar 3rd Block; 10.30 am.
Governor's Cup Golf Tournament Prize Distribution: Thawarchand Gehlot to present awards; Bangalore Golf Club; 12.30 pm.
19th Anniversary of 'Jeevanmukhi' Magazine, Annual Award Ceremony, and Souvenir Release: Hampa Nagarajiah, T Thimmegowda, and P Mallikarjunappa to be present; Awards to be presented to Arathi Krishna, K A Dayananda, N Yatheesh and Nam Nanjappa Rajanna; Akhila Karnataka Kuvempu Samskrutika Vedike; Nayana Auditorium, Kannada Bhavana, J C Road; 4.30 pm.
CULTURAL
Bharatanatyam: Neyya Bhaskar to perform; Kamakshi

and Y K Sandhya Sharma to be present; Natarajarangam; Dhvani, CMRIT College, Srinivasa Reddy Layout, Brookefield; 10.30 am.
Women's Literary Conference and 'Karnataka Sangeetha Samvardhini' Award Ceremony: Inauguration by Manu Baligar; Bhramara Bahaddur to preside; Awards to be presented by R Sunandamma to Nagamani Manohara and Bhagyalakshmi Madangopal; K G Lakshminarayanaappa to be present; Samartha Sahitya and Samskrutika Pratishthana; Kuvempu Hall, Kannada Sahitya Parishat, Chamaraajapet; 10.30 am.
Music Workshop by Varishashree Venugopal: Param Culture; Prestige Centre for Performing Arts Studio Premises; 11 am.
Tala-Maddale Performances: Performance of 'Karna Bhedana' (compiled from various poets) and 'Bhishma Vijaya' (written by Halasinahalli Narasimha Sastry) under the series 'Mahaganagaradallonda Mathina Mantapa-2'; Himmela by Prasanna Bhat Balkal,

Kavyashree Ajeru, Akshay Acharya Bidkal Katte, Akshay Rao Vitla, Manoj Acharya, and Shikshin Sharavoor; Mummela by Sankadagundi Ganapathi Bhat, Pavan Kiranekere, Harish Bolantimogeru, Sunnamkala Visweshwara Bhat, Jabbar Samo, Radhakrishna Kalchar, Vasudeva Rangabhatnand Avinash Ubaradka; Ravindra Kalakshetra, J C Road; 2 pm.

◆ CITY WEATHER ◆

FORECAST
Generally cloudy sky with one or two spells of rain or thundershowers

TEMPERATURES

Maximum	29.3°C
Minimum	21.3°C

Rainfall (as of 8:30 am) --
Humidity (as of 5:30 pm) 69%
Sunset (June 7) 6:44 pm
Sunrise (June 8) 5:53 am
Moonrise 11:27 pm
Moonset 10:36 am

(Relevant data recorded at 5:30 pm) Source: IMD

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URBAN BLINDSPOT

Broken escalators, poor lighting make subways unsafe for pedestrians

City's underpasses, overrun by neglect and encroachment

AMULLYA SHIVASHANKAR
BENGALURU, DHNS

At rush hour in Bengaluru, thousands of vehicles pass through the city's busiest junctions. Beneath this ceaseless flow lies a largely invisible network of pedestrian subways designed to help people cross roads safely, away from speeding traffic and chaotic intersections.

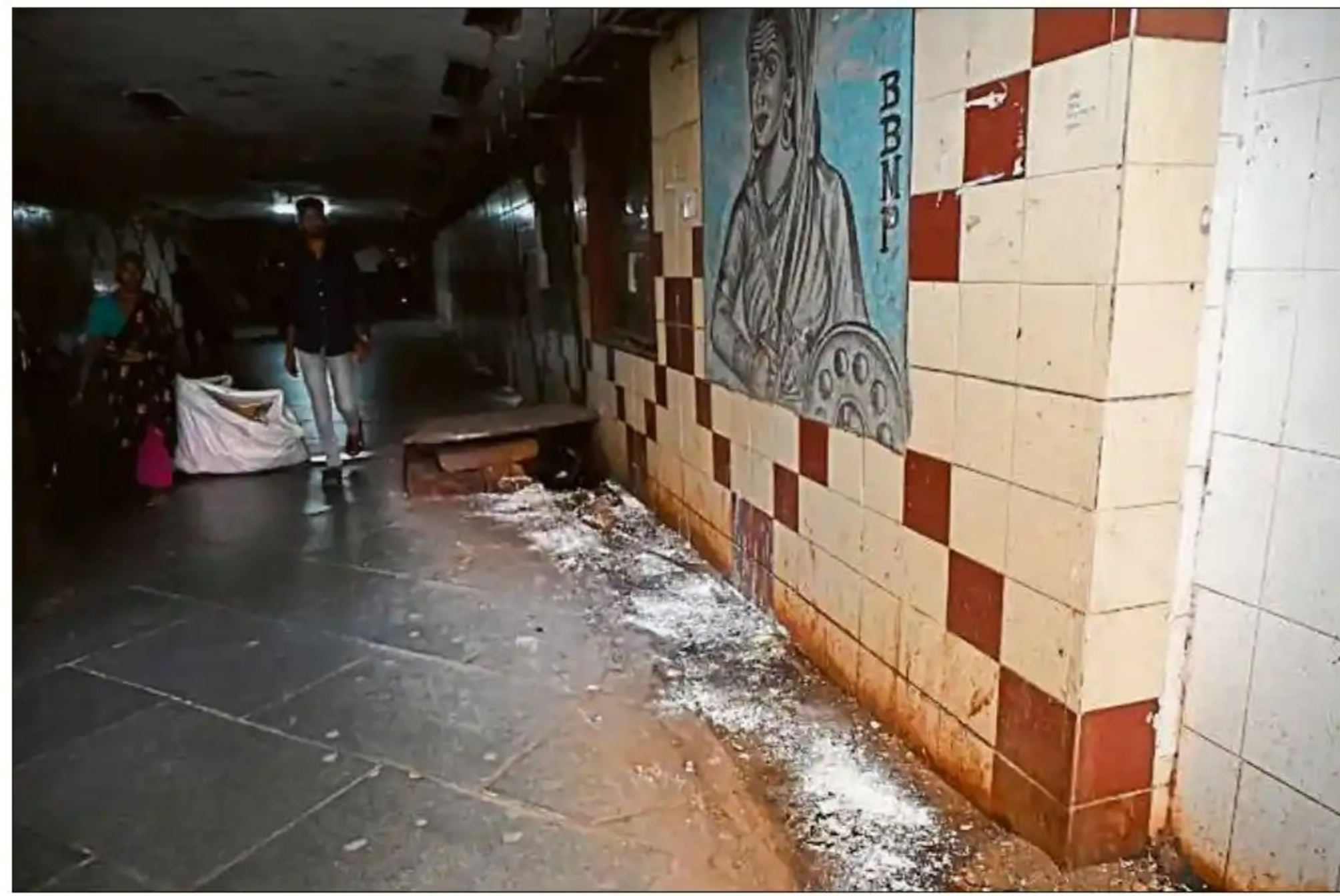
Conceived as a critical component of the city's pedestrian infrastructure, these underground passages were meant to encourage safer mobility and reduce the risk of fatal accidents on some of Bengaluru's busiest stretches.

At many junctions, using underpasses has become inevitable. However, these passages come with their own safety concerns. Despite several reports on their condition, persistent issues remain. While some underpasses have been encroached upon, others pose a greater safety risk during rain. As Bengaluru invests heavily in flyovers, elevated corridors and Metro expansion, the condition of its footpaths and pedestrian subways raises broader questions about whether the city has overlooked the needs of those who travel on foot.

In recent years, civic agencies and Bengaluru Traffic Police have promoted the use of underpasses. According to data from Bengaluru Traffic Police, 292 pedestrians were killed in 2023, 246 in 2024, 260 in 2025 and 90 till April 2026.

Reality check

DH visited some of the underpasses at crucial junctions in the city, including KR Market, Majestic, Hebbal, Bellary Road and



The KR Market underpass, refurbished under the Smart City project at a cost of around Rs 21 crore, remains poorly maintained. DH PHOTOS/B K JANARDHAN

Pedestrian deaths

Bengaluru Traffic Police data shows that 292 pedestrians were killed in road accidents in 2023, 246 in 2024, 260 in 2025 and 90 till April 2026.

Nrupathunga Road.

The underpass at KR Market was refurbished under the Smart City project at an estimated cost of around Rs 21 crore and handed over to the erstwhile Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) in 2022.

The underpass connects the market to Victoria Hospital, Kalasipalya Main Road, KR Market Bus Terminal, Mysore Road, KR Road and SJP Road. Compared to other underpasses, users said it is difficult to navigate because of multiple entry and exit points.

The underpass is equipped with escalators. However, they have not been functional, preventing senior citizens and other vulnerable users from using the facility with ease. Vendors who regularly carry

heavy loads also prefer walking through traffic instead of using the underpass, defeating the purpose of the facility.

Shamalamma, a flower vendor in the city, said, "Chickpete Metro station is near the underpass and we carry heavy bags. An escalator or lift would be helpful. We use escalators while travelling by Metro and it is very helpful. Here, they have installed it, but we cannot use it."

Another senior citizen, Ramanandha K, a retired government employee, said, "Navigating the entrance between the vegetable vendors is a stunt in itself."

Chief Engineer of Bengaluru Central City Corporation, BCCC, Vijaykumar Haridas, said the entrance would be cleared shortly.

Majestic underpass

If someone mistakes the Majestic underpass for a market, they would not be entirely wrong. From footwear to electronics, there is little that the underpass does not offer. Almost completely encroached upon by vendors



Broken ceiling panels greet pedestrians at the underpass connecting Veterinary College and CBI on Bellary Road.

and their customers, the underpass and its entry and exit points remain blocked.

According to vendors, the underpass also becomes a hub for sex workers at night.

A BCom student, who did not wish to be named, said, "Though I study in Bengaluru, I regularly come to Majestic to catch a bus to Hassan. If I take time to use the underpass to get to the bus faster, I only get delayed because walking here is that difficult."

Ramakrishna, another regular commuter, said, "There is no designated place for vendors. As their stock increases, they encroach more space. They have even taken up the stairs and stored their stock there."

Many women commuters also said they feel unsafe walking through the underpass as male vendors sit in groups.

A second underpass in Majestic, connecting the Metro station to Krantiveera Sangolli Rayanna Railway Station, has no lights, forcing users to switch on their mobile phone torches.

Ramya Venkatesh, a commuter, said, "We cannot cross the roads because the divider is huge. With heavy luggage, we cannot climb skywalks and underpasses are in this condition. It is difficult for everyone and scary for women travelling alone."

CBI junction, Bellary Road

The underpass connecting Veterinary College and the Central Bureau of Investigation on Bellary Road is used by a large number of college students every day. Due to flyovers and huge dividers, pedestrians have no option but to use underpasses to cross the road.

The tender for workers to clean the underpass has expired and a new tender has been delayed, leaving the underpass dusty. Home guards at the underpass also said it floods during rain and that the panic button installed for safety does not work.

Sushmitha N K, a student at Government Veterinary College, said, "When it rains, the underpass floods and we cannot cross the road. We end up using the 'magic boxes' a few metres away, but they do not have a footpath. We have to navigate vehicles."

A similar situation prevails at the underpass connecting Maharani Cluster University on Sheshadri Road to Nrupathunga Road.

Speaking to DH, Pommala Sunil Kumar, Commissioner of Bengaluru North City Corporation, BNCC, GBA, said, "Underpasses are part of our monsoon preparedness. We are actively trying to improve them and resolve the issues."

About 26 vehicular and pedestrian underpasses under BNCC have been painted and marked to stop people from using them during rain.

BBMP cannot demand free land for road widening, says HC

Civic body withheld modified plan over relinquishment deed

BENGALURU, DHNS

The High Court of Karnataka has ruled that the BBMP, now GBA, is not empowered under the KTCP Act or any applicable planning regulation to compel the relinquishment of privately owned land free of cost for widening an existing road under the Master Plan.

Justice Suraj Govindaraj made the observation while holding that the BBMP's action of withholding the modified sanctioned plan until the petitioner executed a relinquishment deed amounted to deprivation of property without the authority of law and violated Article 300A of the Constitution.

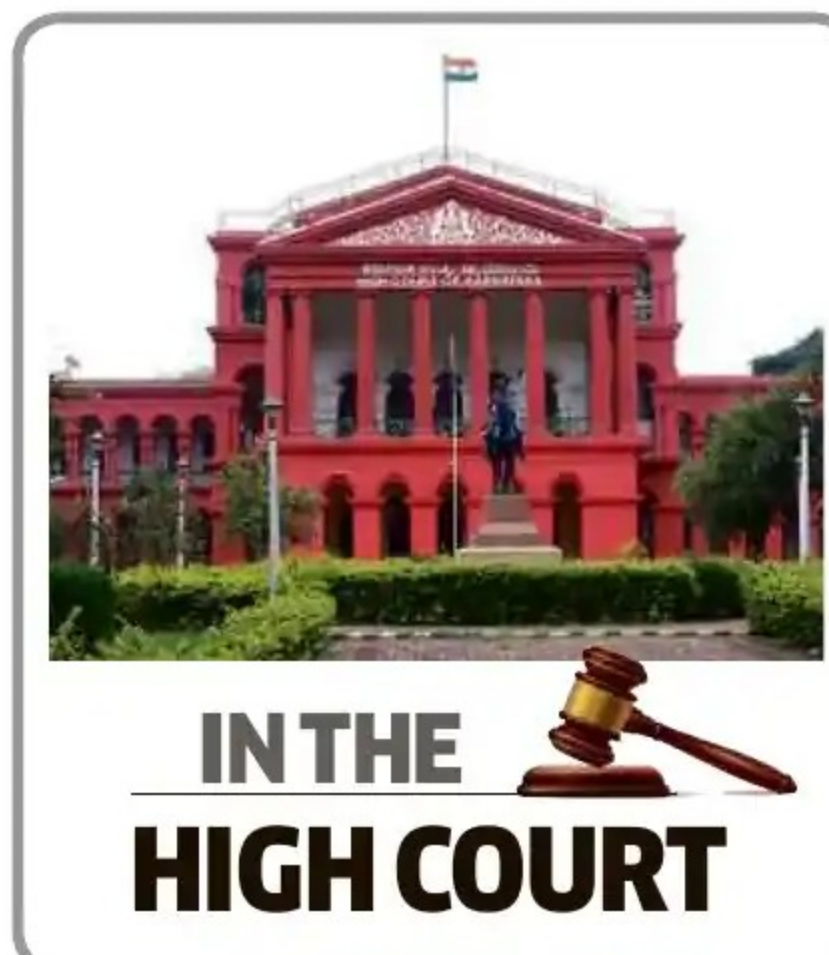
The petitioner, M Shashikumar, a resident of Bengaluru, had entered into a joint development agreement to develop his 2 acres and 4.5 guntas of land at Thalaghattapura Village on Kanakapura Road.

Modified plan

The petitioner approached the BBMP seeking a modified sanctioned plan for a residential complex and remitted Rs 1.33 crore towards statutory fees, cess, labour cess and other applicable charges. Though the modified plan sanction was approved, on September 30, 2024, the BBMP issued a rejoinder asking the petitioner to relinquish, free of cost, 381.70 sq m from the property in favour of the BBMP for widening the existing 31-metre Kanakapura Main Road on the eastern side of the property to 45 metres, in terms of the Revised Master Plan, 2015.

The petitioner contended that the authorities could not compel him to surrender land free of cost as a precondition for granting building plan sanction for widening existing roads under the Master Plan.

On the other hand, the BBMP argued that the proposed road widening would substantially benefit the petitioner, as he would get im-



IN THE HIGH COURT

proved access, better ingress and egress facilities and a corresponding enhancement in the utility and value of the property.

The petitioner contended that the authorities could not compel him to surrender land free of cost as a precondition for granting building plan sanction for widening an existing road under the Master Plan.

After perusing the legal provisions, including the Karnataka Town and Country Planning (KTCP) Act, the court noted that free relinquishment without any form of consideration is not a legally available option. The court said the provisions relating to surrender without compensation apply only to roads and civic amenities that are part of the internal layout itself.

The authorities are required to resort to acquisition proceedings under Section 69 of the KTCP Act or grant TDR, whichever is permissible under the applicable planning regulations, the court said.

"The land earmarked under the Revised Master Plan, 2015, for widening of an existing road does not stand on the same footing as roads, parks, civic amenity sites and open spaces forming part of an internal layout proposed for sanction under the provisions of the Karnataka Town and Country Planning Act, 1961 and the applicable planning regulations," Justice Suraj Govindaraj said. The court directed the BBMP, now GBA, to release the modified sanctioned plan within 30 days and added that the authorities are at liberty to acquire the petitioner's land in accordance with law.

Khata campaign sees 11,000 visitors in four weeks

BENGALURU, DHNS: In just four weeks since the launch of the 'My Khata, My Right' campaign, close to 11,000 people have visited open houses to get their khata-related grievances addressed.

As part of the campaign, 50 open house centres are being set up across the five city corporations every Saturday. Citizens can visit these centres

to submit applications and follow up on pending ones.

According to the Greater Bengaluru Authority, close to 1,773 applications were received on June 6 alone.

Various grievances addressed at these centres include applications for e-khata, B-khata to A-khata conversion, khata corrections and mutations.

Early menopause may impact memory, cognition: Study

AMULLYA SHIVASHANKAR
BENGALURU, DHNS

A cross-sectional study on cognitive decline in women who attained premature menopause shows that menopause is directly associated with cognitive performance.

Among older women who experienced premature menopause, the condition is adversely associated with cognitive performance, suggesting that the effects of reduced oestrogen are likely to become evident later in life. Menopause before 45 is usually considered premature menopause.

"Women experiencing premature menopause tend to have a higher risk of cognitive decline compared with women who hit menopause in the standard age range of around 45 to 55 years. Oestrogen supports multiple brain processes, including memory and neuronal signalling, and also helps keep blood vessels in a safer state," said Dr Deepthi Ashwin, Consultant, Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

The overall risk and con-

BRAIN IMPACT

According to doctors, the brain has to cope for decades with lower oestrogen levels, which could significantly contribute to memory issues and dementia in advanced stages.



sequences also depend on a combination of hormonal, genetic, medical and lifestyle factors. Women can attain menopause naturally or through surgical intervention when their ovaries are removed.

"Women who undergo surgical menopause, especially after the removal of both ovaries at a young age, are at higher risk because oestrogen levels drop suddenly. Women with underlying health conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity, depression or cardiovascular disease may be even more vulnerable. Smoking and a sedentary lifestyle can further increase the risk," said Dr Anuradha H K, Lead Consultant, Neurology.

While most urban women attain premature menopause

largely due to lifestyle issues, women in rural areas often attain it due to surgical procedures, doctors said.

"Hysterectomy contributes largely to cases among rural women. This is seen in women from rural backgrounds with low education levels, who opt for hysterectomy for minor ailments. They are not aware of other treatment options and choose hysterectomy as part of treatment," said Dr Sushma K, Obstetrician and Gynaecologist.

"The government needs to take action to prevent unnecessary hysterectomies and create social awareness about other modes of treatment for minor issues such as bleeding problems, small fibroids or chronic cervical problems," she added.

Drunk duo booked for creating nuisance

BENGALURU, DHNS: Jeevan Bheemanagar police have registered a case against two men for allegedly creating a public nuisance on Old Airport Road under the influence of alcohol.

The accused have been identified as James Francis, 23, and Mohan, 21. Both are daily wage workers and residents of Murugeshpalya.

According to the FIR, the incident occurred on Wednesday when the duo, who had allegedly consumed alcohol at a bar, were found walking in the middle of the road, shouting and using abusive language. Their actions reportedly caused inconvenience to motorists and pedestrians. Passersby alerted the police, following which both men were taken into custody.

They were later taken to CMH Hospital, where a medical examination reportedly confirmed alcohol consumption.

"They were heavily intoxicated and were creating a ruckus on the road," a senior police officer said.

Govt issues order on OC relief for power connection

BENGALURU, DHNS

It's official: power supply applications that were kept pending for houses without an Occupancy Certificate (OC) will now be processed and power supply will be provided.

In an order, the Urban Development Department (UDD) said all ground-plus-three-floor properties or stilt-parking-plus-four-floor properties constructed on plots of up to 2,400 sq ft, with deviations of up to 20%, will be provided power connections without the submission of an OC.

However, this is a one-time provision and will apply only to buildings that applied for a power connection before May 31, 2026.

Escom officials have been

asked to check whether the OC concession is applicable to the properties concerned and record photographs of the property after conducting a spot inspection before approving the application.

Earlier this week, Chief Minister D K Shivakumar had announced the decision to provide one-time relief to property owners who were struggling to get power connections. From April 2025, following a Supreme Court ruling, power supply companies had stopped approving power connections for houses without OCs. This had left many property owners in the lurch.

The decision to provide one-time relief is expected to help close to one lakh households in Bescom jurisdiction.



BLUE BATTLE

Book highlights democratic fight for Bengaluru's lakes

BENGALURU, DHNS

A new book chronicles the fight to protect Bengaluru's lakes from privatisation and ecological degradation, one of the state's most significant environmental struggles.

The book, titled For a Deeply Democratic Blue Revolution in Karnataka, has been authored by Leo F Saldanha and Bhargavi S Rao.

Spanning just over 100 pages and accompanied by photographs, the book is centred on the landmark Karnataka High Court judgment of April 11, 2012, delivered in response to a public

interest litigation filed by environmental groups in the state, including the Environment Support Group (ESG). The authors examine how the verdict reshaped the discourse on lake governance by emphasising ecological protection, public interest and community participation.

The book was launched on Friday at Samagata Foundation on Church Street.

It pays tribute to the late birdwatcher Deepak Arya, whose early warnings about the privatisation of lakes helped spark wider public concern over the future of Bengaluru's water bodies.



The city's water bodies have long been at the centre of debates on conservation, public access and urban growth.

It traces the city's changing relationship with its lakes, documenting their histor-

ical, ecological and social significance, while highlighting the pressures posed

by rapid urbanisation.

Lake activism

As part of the book launch, independent researcher Neenu Suresh led a discussion on "Lessons from lake-based activism in Bengaluru". Neenu argued that Bengaluru's lake conservation movement must become more inclusive and democratic if it is to effectively protect the city's water bodies in the long term.

She traced the evolution of environmentalism in India and situated Bengaluru's lake movements within broader debates on urban environmental governance. Drawing on her research into nearly

80 lake groups in the city, she noted that Bengaluru's activism reflects contrasting approaches to conservation, from protectionist conservatism to a more socially inclusive approach.

Highlighting the role of citizen action, she credited environmental organisations with challenging lake privatisation and bringing public attention to the issue. However, she cautioned that many lake groups have become increasingly dependent on bureaucratic processes and corporate funding, limiting their ability to question broader policies affecting Bengaluru's lake ecosystems.

DH

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Monsoon gains steam, orange alert sounded in coastal dists

Heavy rains infuse life into waterbodies in Kittur K'taka

BENGALURU, DHNS

A day after reaching Karnataka coast, southwest monsoon advanced further on Saturday as most parts of coastal districts and many parts of Kittur Karnataka experienced heavy showers. Overflowing streams, waterlogging at agricultural fields and lake breaches were reported in several parts of the aforementioned regions.

Heavy rains battered Dakshina Kannada district on Saturday. Sharp showers flooded roads, apartment complexes and low-lying residential areas in Mangaluru and Udipi cities.

The apartment dwellers at Kodialbail in Mangaluru faced a tough time with rainwater gushing into the ground floors, especially the parking areas. The occupants had no option but to wait until the floodwaters receded before getting into their routines.

A bike rider suffered injuries after a tree collapsed on him at Vamadapadavu in Bantwal. The tree also snapped the power lines in the area.

The Kolangara lake breached after a portion of its bund collapsed following heavy showers in Kotekar town panchayat limits. Bantwal town recorded 50 mm of rain in the last 24 hours ending 8.30 am

on Saturday. Mangaluru registered 40 mm while Dharmasthala and Moodbidri witnessed 30 mm of rain apiece.

Unrelenting rains have left many roads in Bhatkal town, including the main street and the one in front of the TMC office flooded, causing grave hardships to the motorists. The situation at Ranginakatte was bad. The coastal towns of Uttara Kannada district, including Honnavar, Gokarna, Ankola and Karwar are experiencing heavy intermittent rains.

The IMD has sounded an orange alert for all three coastal districts predicting heavy rains for the next two to three days. The fishermen have been warned against entering the rough sea. The Kittur Karnataka districts - Dharwad, Gadag, Haveri, Belagavi and Vijayapura - received heavy rain on Saturday evening.

Rain, coupled with thunder and lightning, lashed Gadag and parts of the district, including Laxmeshwar, Mulgund and Gajendragad. Showers left several streams in the district - Gadadhalla, Agasarahalla, Abbigeri halla, Halkeri halla and Maaranabasari halla - in spate.



Flash floods in a stream near Agadi in Haveri district affected traffic on Haveri-Guttal Road following heavy showers on Saturday evening. DH PHOTOS



A portion of the rain-battered state highway 75 caves in between Naranal and Chimmamchod in Chincholi taluk of Kalaburagi, bring vehicular movement to a grinding halt.



Unrelenting rain leaves many homes flooded at Kodialbail in Mangaluru city.

Jumbo attacks claim 8 lives in the past six months in Kodagu

Four of the victims are women

K S GIRISH
MADIKERI (KODAGU DISTRICT), DHNS

A total of eight people have lost their lives in elephant attacks in Kodagu district from January till date, this year. Among the victims are four women.

In March, Pooja (17), a pre-university student from Bettathur village in Madikeri taluk, and Jalajakshi (55), a former member of the Nanjarayapattana Gram Panchayat from Valnur village in Kus-

halnagar taluk, were killed in separate wild elephant attacks. On May 18, a woman tourist died after being caught in a clash between two captive elephants at the Dubare elephant camp.

The first fatality of the year occurred on January 1, when Ponnappa (61) was killed in a wild elephant attack at Sangayyanapura in Ganagur Gram Panchayat near Shanthalli. Since then, the death toll has continued to rise.

No permanent measures

Sofar, eight people have died, while dozens have been injured. The operation to drive away elephants are taken up when fatality occurs. No permanent measures have been taken to check elephant men-

ace, said the residents.

Several elephants have been camping in the plantations. The government has spoken of implementing a plan to capture elephants camping inside the plantations and relocate them to designated areas. However, the proposal has not been put into action.

The Forest Department has launched an operation to locate the elephant involved in the latest attack. Several elephants have recently strayed out of forests within the Nagarahole region. A lone tusker has been roaming in the area and is suspected to be responsible for the attack. The Forest personnel are conducting a search operation to trace and monitor the animal.

Chemists' Association seeks reforms in Drugs Control Dept

BENGALURU, DHNS

Karnataka Chemists and Druggists' Association has urged the Health Department officials to bring in efficiency, transparency and administrative effectiveness in the Drugs Control Department.

In its letter to the principal secretary, the association complained that there is widespread dissatisfaction over the administration of the Drug Safety Department.

The letter stated: It is also a matter of serious concern that several important decisions appear to be driven by individual decisions rather than established Administrative principles and institutional procedures. Such a situation has adversely affected the credibility of the Department and creates uncertainty among stakeholders.

Further, it is unfortunate that Umesh S, a senior officer

in the department, who was earlier placed under suspension by the government while serving as the regular state drugs controller, the highest position in the state, has been reinstated and continues to hold the influential position in the department on an ad hoc basis only, the association said in the letter.

This has raised serious concerns among stakeholders regarding accountability and governance standards within the Department by a tainted official, as well as non-implementation of the Drugs & Cosmetics Act, being a Central Act, controlled and executed by a suspended official, that too while an enquiry is still pending.

It is also observed that the present commissioner does not possess adequate knowledge or adequate experience in the administration and implementation of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act and related

regulatory matters.

Considering the technical and regulatory nature of the department, which has a direct impact on the Health Sector, it would be appropriate to appoint a senior IAS officer with relevant administrative experience, the association demanded.

The recent incidents in the Drugs Control Department clearly indicate the extent of irregularities and corruption prevailing in the department. As evidence of this, the Assistant Drugs Controller (ADC), Kolar, was apprehended by the Lokayukta Authorities (by chasing), and a raid was also conducted against the ADC Mangalore and recovered assets and money. Such incidents have raised serious concerns among stakeholders regarding the transparency, integrity, and efficiency of the department's functioning, the association said.

SIM swap fraud: HC tells BSNL to pay Rs 50.5 lakh compensation to co-op bank

BENGALURU, DHNS

The high court has ordered Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) to pay Rs 50.5 lakh compensation to a co-operative bank in Shivamogga after finding negligence and vicarious liability with the telecom service provider in a fraud involving SIM swap.

"The financial consequences of issuing a duplicate SIM to a fraudster can be catastrophic for the victim and, as this judgment demonstrates, equally consequential for the telecom service provider in civil law," Justice

Suraj Govindaraj said.

Basaveshwara Pattana Sahakara Bank Niyamitha, a co-operative bank, was maintaining a current account with Canara Bank, Shiralkoppa Branch and had availed internet banking facilities by registering a BSNL mobile number to receive One-Time Passwords (OTP) for authentication.

On February 7, 2019, the co-operative bank noticed a transfer of Rs 87,70,000 from its current account through RTGS/NEFT. In this, Rs 30 lakh was subsequently reverse credited to its account.

The police investigation revealed that some unidentified persons had obtained a duplicate SIM card from the BSNL office in Bengaluru and gained access to the OTP mechanism. The co-operative bank stated that the cyber-crime police had recovered Rs 7,12,238.

On the other hand, BSNL argued that the co-operative bank and the Canara Bank had failed to maintain confidentiality with respect to the internet banking login credentials and passwords and that the proceedings against BSNL were premature as the investigation was still underway.

After perusing the material, Justice Suraj Govindaraj noted that BSNL is vicariously liable for the wrongful issuance of a duplicate SIM card by one of its employees.

The court further ordered that BSNL also be liable to pay consequential damages amounting to Rs 5 lakh for reputational harm, liquidity crisis, and operational disruption caused to the co-op bank.

The court said the criminal proceedings pending before the competent court in relation to the fraud shall continue unaffected by its order on compensation.

Protective steps

Noting that the OTP-based two-factor authentication is the most widely deployed in the banking sector, the court said that the telecom service providers occupy a unique and irreplaceable position.

"The verification of subscriber identity before issuing a duplicate or replacement SIM card is not a bureaucratic formality and that every telecom service provider must treat every request for a duplicate SIM card with the gravity it deserves. The verification must be thorough, the documentation must be examined carefully, and where there is any doubt about the identity or authority of the applicant, the request must be declined and the subscriber must be contacted through alternate channels," Justice Suraj Govindaraj said.

The court has asked the banking institutions to protect their customers and themselves from SIM swap fraud by registering multiple OTP delivery channels, implementing time-delays between SIM swap notifications and large transactions to provide a window for detection and sending transaction alerts to alternate communication channels.



ಕೇಂದ್ರೀಯ ವಿದ್ಯಾಲಯ ಡಿಆರ್‌ಡಿ

ಸಿ.ವಿ. ರಾಮನ್ ನಗರ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು-560093

KENDRIYA VIDYALAYA DRDO

C.V. RAMAN NAGAR, BENGALURU-560093 Phone : -080-25243919

Email: kvdrdobangalore@gmail.com, Website: https://drdobangalore.kvs.ac.in/

Ref:KV.DRDO/SF/2026-27/165 DATED : 05.06.2026

WALK-IN-INTERVIEW FOR CONTRACTUAL TEACHERS - 2026-27

Walk-in-Interview will be conducted in KV. DRDO, C.V.Ramannagar, Bengaluru: 93 for empannelment of teachers on part-time contractual basis for the Academic Year 2026-27 for the posts on the dates given below:

Date of Walk-in-Interview	Category of Posts / Subjects
15.06.2026 (Monday) 09.00 AM to 02.00 PM	A) Trained Graduate Teachers (TGT) Sanskrit B) Vocational Skill Coaches Dance

Important Instructions:
1.Detailed information and the Google Form are available on the school website: <https://drdobangalore.kvs.ac.in>, Ph: 080-25243919
2.Candidates are required to register their application through the official portal : <https://samvida-sathi.kvs.gov.in/>
3.It is also mandatory for all applicants to fill out the Google Form and appear for the interview on the scheduled date with all relevant documents and self-attested copies.

PRINCIPAL

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that our clients are intending to purchase the property fully described in the schedule hereunder from Smt. J. Suhitha and others.

Any person/s having any right, title or interest over the schedule property may lodge their objections supported by documents with the undersigned within seven days. Any belated claim/s will not be entertained and the same will not be binding on our client and our clients will proceed to purchase the same.

SCHEDULE

ITEM No.1: All that piece and parcel of converted lands bearing Sy. No.63/2, an extent of 3 acre 11 guntas, Sy. No.64/6 an extent of 01 acre 39 guntas, Sy. No.82/5 an extent of 2 acre 01 gunta, in all 7 acre 11 guntas, situated at Harohalli Village & Hobli, Harohalli Taluk, Ramanagara District and conjointly bounded on:
East by: Property of Huchaiha & ors, **West by:** Property of Venkatappa & Venkatakrishnaiah, **North by:** Property of Ningaiah, **South by:** Harohalli Anekal Main Road.
ITEM No.2: All that piece and parcel of converted lands bearing Sy. No.63/4, an extent of 31.00 guntas situated at Harohalli Village & Hobli, Harohalli Taluk, Ramanagara District and bounded on:
East by: Property of Huchaiha, **West by:** Property of J. Suhitha **North by:** Sarkani Halla, **South by:** Property of J. Suhitha.
ITEM No.3: All that piece and parcel of converted lands bearing Sy. No.64/3, an extent of 25.08 guntas situated at Harohalli Village & Hobli, Harohalli Taluk, Ramanagara District and bounded on:
East by: Property of Huchaiha, **West by:** Property of J. Suhitha & Babu, **North by:** Property of Venkatakrishnaiah, **South by:** Property of J. Suhitha & Babu.
ITEM No.4: All that piece and parcel of converted lands bearing Sy. No.64/5, an extent of 25.08 guntas situated at Harohalli Village & Hobli, Harohalli Taluk, Ramanagara District and bounded on:
East by: Property of Huchaiha **West by:** Govt Halla & Property of J. Suhitha, **North by:** Property of Koovanna, **South by:** Property of J. Suhitha.

REDDY & REDDY ASSOCIATES
ARAVIND REDDY .H. Advocate
No. S-5, 2nd Floor, No.1, Thimmaiah Chambers, 1st Cross, Gandhinagar, Bangalore-560 009. Mob: 9945506953. Email:aruhnmt@yahoo.com

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

E-Tender Notice No.: S-TRD-29-2026-27-01-15 Dated: 03.06.2026

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tenders for the following works:

Item of work	Approx. Value
Provision of various OHE / PSI caution boards and Sectioning Diagrams over Bengaluru (SBC).	Rs. 72,10,395.49/-

Last date for submission of bids: Upto 15:00 Hrs. on 22.06.2026

For details log on to: www.ireps.gov.in

Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer/ Traction Distribution/Bengaluru

PUB/188/AAO/PRB/SWR/2026-27

Download the RailOne app for easy ticket booking, PNR status, and more railway services.

South Western Railway - SWR | SWRR | SWRAYWAYHQ | @sw_railways

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

Tender Notice No.: ECN-TRD-04-2026-RT Dated: 03.06.2026

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tenders for the following works:

Item of work	Approx. Value
Electrification of Proposed Construction of New Crossing station at Sravanur with structures / foundation suitable for 2x25kv OHE.	Rs. 2,56,82,475.13

Last date for submission of bids: Upto 11:00 Hrs. on 25.06.2026

For details log on to: www.ireps.gov.in

Dy. Chief Electrical Engineer/TRD/ Construction/Bengaluru

PUB/192/AAO/PRB/SWR/2026-27

Download the RailOne app for easy ticket booking, PNR status, and more railway services.

South Western Railway - SWR | SWRR | SWRAYWAYHQ | @sw_railways

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

Tender Notice No. CN/05/2026 Dated: 02.06.2026

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tenders through IREPS only for supply of following items:

Tender No.	Description in Brief
56261091	PVC Insulated, Armoured, Unscreened, Underground Railway Signalling Cable Copper conductor conforming to RD50 Specification No. IRS-S-63/2014 (Rev. 4.0) or latest, Size: 12 Core x 1.5 Sq.mm. (Qty. 3428 Kms.)

Last date for Submission/Tender Due on: Upto 10:30 Hrs. on 30.06.2026

For details log on to: www.ireps.gov.in

Dy. Chief Materials Manager/Construction/ Bengaluru Cantonment

PUB/193/AAO/PRB/SWR/2026-27

Download the RailOne app for easy ticket booking, PNR status, and more railway services.

South Western Railway - SWR | SWRR | SWRAYWAYHQ | @sw_railways

कार्यालय नगर परिषद् चक्रधरपुर (पश्चिमी सिंहभूम)

email : npchakradharpur@gmail.com

“शुद्धि-पत्र”

एतद् द्वारा सूचित किया जाता है कि इस कार्यालय के ज्ञापांक 640 /नप0 चक्रधरपुर दिनांक 26.05.2026 द्वारा निकाली गई e-Tender Reference No: CKP/NP/06/ 20 26-27 जिसका शुद्धि पत्र का PR No. – 380849 है, निम्न प्रकार से आंशिक संशोधन किया जाता है जो निम्नवत है :-

01	Date of Publication of Tender on website	Date :- 06-06-2026
02	Date/Time for receipt of bids(online)	From 06-06-2026 at 05.00 PM to 18-06-2026 up to 05.00 PM
03	Date of Bid Opening	22-06-2026 at 11.00 AM
04	Name & address of office inviting tender	Executive Officer, Nagar Parishad Chakradharpur
05	Contact no. of Procurement officer	Mobile - 7779978855
06	Helpline number	Mobile - 06587355843

ह0 / – कार्यपालक पदाधिकारी चक्रधरपुर नगर परिषद।

PR.NO.381727 West Singhbhum(26-27):D

THE KARNATAKA STATE CRICKET ASSOCIATION

M.Chinnaswamy Stadium, Cubbon Road, Bangalore-560001

TENDER NOTIFICATION

The Karnataka State Cricket Association, M.Chinnaswamy Stadium, Cubbon Road, Bangalore, invites sealed tenders from GST Compliant, registered class-II and above KPWD / CPWD/ Equivalent contractors who have completed similar work for construction of peripheral drainage, providing and dibbling of Bermuda grass at Hassan Cricket Ground.

Sl. No.	Name of the work	Estimated Cost	Plus taxes	EMD	Refundable
1.	a. Construction of peripheral drainage at Hassan Cricket ground Estimated Cost - Rs.58,84,886/- plus taxes EMD - Rs.59,000/- Cost of tender form Rs.10,000/- plus taxes (Non refundable) b. Providing & dibbling of Bermuda grass at Hassan Cricket ground Estimated Cost - 36,60,000/- plus taxes EMD Rs.37,000/- Cost of tender form Rs.2500/- plus taxes (Non refundable)				

8th June 2026 to 22nd June 2026

23rd June 2026

25th June 2026 before 5.00 p.m (Technical & Commercial Separately)

Technical bid will be opened on same day at 5.30p.m. Any changes will be intimated by KSCA.

90 Days from the date of work order for drainage work
120 Days from the date of work order for providing & dibbling of Bermuda grass

Tender documents may be obtained from the Office of the KSCA, by submitting a requisition in the company's letter head between 11.00 a.m to 5.00 p.m on any working days. For any clarification please contact Mr.H.A.Venkatesprasad, AGM Civil Engineering Dept., Mobile No. 99456 04515 (Chief Executive Officer) KSCA

Land acquisition: Shidlaghatta farmers’ agitation enters 82nd day

Accuse MLA of derailing movement with counter-protest

FROM THE GROUND

ASHWIN B M
CHIKKABALLAPUR, DHNS

Farmers in Chikkaballapur have been sitting in protest outside the Deputy Commissioner's office for 82 days straight. They are angry because the government (KIADB) wants to take away 2,823 acres of fertile farming land across 13 villages of Jangamakote hobli to build a factory zone called the Sir MV Deep Tech Park.

forward, the farmers went to court and got a stay order from the High Court, which temporarily stopped all government work. Protesting farmers have criticized the local MLA, accusing the legislator of engineering a counter-narrative to justify the acquisition under the guise of industrial development. "The MLA has set up an opposing camp claiming the region wants industries. To do this, they have brought in middlemen and fake farmers who do not own land here to mimic public support," alleged leaders from the Raitha Horata Samiti. Devaraj N K, Secretary of the Horata Samiti, pointed to historical precedents to warn against the government's industrial rehabilitation promises. "Look at the plight of the families who lost their lands



Protesting farmers at their makeshift tent outside the Chikkaballapur Deputy Commissioner's office on Saturday. DH PHOTO/ASHWIN B M

during Phase I of the Devanahalli industrial development. They were promised jobs and prosperity, but today they are reduced to daily-wage labourers or security guards, stripped of their dignity and their heritage. We will not let Shidlaghatta's farmers suffer the same fate," Devaraj said. According to another farmer protester Lakshmipathy, they (KIADB) don't say anything else except, 'We need this land and we are acquiring it.' When we were called regarding this matter, a huge commotion broke out in Bengaluru.

Our sub-registrar value (SR Value) was Rs 27 Lakh. Initially, they offered a 1:3 compensation ratio, but the people refused to yield. Then they increased it to 1:4, but even then, no one agreed. They took us in under the pretext of fixing a fair price, made us sit down and offered Rs 1.2-1.3 crore. But we didn't go there to make a deal; we stood firm to save our land. However, they brought in their own hired crowd to praise and applaud the decision. Right now, a few people are sitting in front of the DC office right opposite to our

What the MLA says?

Shidlaghatta MLA B N Ravi Kumar told DH, "There are two groups among the protesters: one in favour of the acquisition and the other against it. Out of the 2,823 acres, farmers owning 474 acres are ready to part with their lands, 716 acres is government gomala land and 530 acres belongs to a private company called PACL. The landowners of the remaining 1,103 acres are against the acquisition. I've been following it up and the DC has assured them of a meeting with KIADB officials soon," he said.

tent. Our MLA has set up his own faction there, shouting, 'We are ready to give our land, please take it' But none of them are actual landowners.

'Green steel' can help India avoid over Rs 100 lakh cr coal imports: Study

CHIRANJEEVI KULKARNI
BENGALURU, DHNS

The Indian steel industry can break away from its dependency on coal and cut imports of more than Rs 100 lakh crore (current dollar rates) over the next 40 years if it shifts to green hydrogen, says a new study.



India has set a target of increasing its steel production capacity to 300 million tonnes by 2030-31. REUTERS FILE PHOTO FOR REPRESENTATION

Researchers at the India Energy and Climate Center, and Energy and Resources Group of the University of California, Berkeley noted that India has set a target of increasing its steel production capacity to 300 million tonnes by 2030-31.

However, this will require 5.8 billion tonnes of cumulative coking coal imports at a cost of USD 1.2 trillion (Rs 115 lakh crore) to power the Blast Furnace and Basic Oxygen Furnace (BF-BOF) over a 40-year timeframe. The burning of coal is also estimated to release a cumulative 19.5 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide.

Cheaper price
Green hydrogen, meanwhile, can be produced in India at a cheaper price by 2030. Hydrogen-based direct reduced iron paired with electric arc furnaces (H2-DRI/EAF) will reach about \$562/tonne, about 5% above the cost (\$536/tonne) of steel produced through the conventional blast furnace (BF-BOF) routes.

shape where the next wave of steel capacity goes, how it is financed and who captures the trade upside. They took into account India's low-cost renewable energy resources, inflation of coking coal (over 90% of India's coking coal is imported) and rupee depreciation. "India is at a strategic decision point in steel. If future capacity is built around imported coking coal, the country would hardwire currency and price volatility risks into one of its most important industrial sectors. Green steel offers an alternative path," said Neelima Jain, Director for Industrial and Trade Policy at IECC.

However, considering that hydrogen production is expected to get cheaper, green steel will get cheaper by 2035 below \$500/tonne. Green steel also has another advantage in the international market, especially in the European Union where the carbon prices are projected to rise.

They noted that green steel can be anchored in long-term, fixed-price, rupee-denominated clean power contracts. "Conventional steel depends on imported coking coal priced in dollars. Green steel can be powered by domestic renewable electricity under long-term rupee contracts. Over time, that makes it far more resilient," Dominguez Bennett noted.

The study, at the same time, noted that favourable long-term economics alone will not be enough to deliver the initial commercial projects. It called for a "bankable market-creation framework" that includes long-term green steel offtake agreements, credible standards for measuring and verifying emissions, reliable access to clean power and targeted risk-sharing mechanisms for early projects.

K'taka blood banks in need ...

Blood, from Flap Page 1

"We have to separate the collected blood units into plasma, platelets and red blood cells within eight hours. While plasma can be stored for nearly a year and red blood cells have an expiry period of 42 days, platelets last only five days. Platelets have to be discarded if not used within five days. During the rise in dengue cases, there is a high demand for platelets. Otherwise, the demand is not very high and we have no option but to discard," a senior official from the Karnataka State Blood Transfusion Council (KSBTC) told DH. In a few cases, blood units are also lost owing to technical problems such as leakage and clotting. Over the years, the discard rate has come down, from 3.99% in 2022-23 to 3.7% in 2025-26. "In fact, the World Health Organization (WHO) allows up to 5% discard rate. To minimise wastage, the WHO guidelines emphasise strict inventory management (FIFO: First-In, First-Out), proper temperature control and rational clinical use of components. We are following this and creating awareness among private blood banks as well," another official said. However, experts working in the field said that the discard rate could come down further if blood banks follow better practices. The health department recently mandated that all the blood banks in the state should get a NABH accreditation. "It is important to follow the process, maintain documentation on testing the samples and have a record. All of these help towards improving the quality. The NABH accreditation helps improve the quality significantly and all blood banks should work towards achieving this," said Dr Latha Jagannathan, medical director and managing trustee at Bangalore Medical Services Trust (BMST), which runs Rotary Bangalore TTK Blood Centre.

ventory management (FIFO: First-In, First-Out), proper temperature control and rational clinical use of components. We are following this and creating awareness among private blood banks as well," another official said. However, experts working in the field said that the discard rate could come down further if blood banks follow better practices. The health department recently mandated that all the blood banks in the state should get a NABH accreditation. "It is important to follow the process, maintain documentation on testing the samples and have a record. All of these help towards improving the quality. The NABH accreditation helps improve the quality significantly and all blood banks should work towards achieving this," said Dr Latha Jagannathan, medical director and managing trustee at Bangalore Medical Services Trust (BMST), which runs Rotary Bangalore TTK Blood Centre.

Ramaiah Institute of Technology recognises 30 outstanding projects at annual exhibition



(Left to Right) MR Janakiram, Vice Chairman GEF, MR Kodandaram, Director, RIT, Suhas Gopinath, distinguished alumni of RIT and staff and students of the college.

Ramaiah Institute of Technology (RIT) concluded its two-day Project Exhibition 2026, providing a platform for students to showcase innovative ideas, research outcomes and technology-driven solutions across engineering, architecture and allied disciplines. The exhibition featured 446 projects from 17 departments, displayed across 150 stalls, and was inaugurated by RIT alumnus and CEO of Global Inc., Suhas Gopinath, along with MR Janakiram, Vice Chairman of Gokula Education Foundation, and MR Kodandaram, Director of RIT. At the event, which featured projects such as a Hybrid Bike concept,

Rainwater Conservation Systems, IR-VR applications, Smart Grid technologies and other innovative solutions, MR Kodandaram said, "The projects showcased the creativity, technical competence and problem-solving abilities of our students."

Thirty outstanding projects were honoured by the RIT Alumni Association in recognition of exceptional innovation, technical excellence, research potential and societal impact demonstrated by the student teams. Among the notable award-winning projects were "Synergistic Integration of Kinematic Linkages and Shape Memory Alloy Tendons for a High-Efficiency Airfoil Morphing

Section" by Aerospace Engineering students; "Interweave: Integrated Fashion and Textile Centre" by undergraduate Architecture students; "Symphony of Senses - A Multi-Sensory Public Landscape at Tamhini Ghats" by postgraduate Landscape Architecture students; and "Leaf Extract-Based Therapeutics for Colorectal Cancer" by Biotechnology students. Among those present were Dr NVR Naidu, Principal, RIT; Dr HV Parshwanath, Chief Executive, Gokula Education Foundation (GEF); Dr Karisiddappa, Advisor, GEF; faculty members, alumni, students and industry representatives.

Curated by DH Brandspot

NBW against BJP MLA Sharanu Salagar

► BASAVAKALYAN (BIDAR DISTRICT), DHNS: A Bengaluru court has issued a non-bailable (NBW) arrest warrant against Basavakalyan BJP MLA Sharanu Salagar in

connection with a 2023 case. A case was registered against Salagar for creating a ruckus in the house of a Muslim alleging cow slaughter during Bakrid in 2023. The police

have already filed a charge sheet. Since the MLA appear before the court for the hearing, the court has issued a warrant to him along with nine others named in the case.

HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS

Sri K R Pradeep

Advocate, Supreme court for being awarded honorary doctorate from Tumakuru University, Karnataka.

Best Wishes

Akhila Bharath Sri Vasavi Penugonda Trust

DR. P.N. GOVINDARAJULU	S. SATISH	K.R. KRISHNA	KSV RAJA	N.S. SRINIVASA MURTHY
President	Vice President	General Secretary	Secretary	Treasurer

Patrons, Executive Committee Members & Board of Trustees

Live-in partner kills lawyer's daughter, both booked

Murder, from Jacket Page 2

Speaking to DH, Praveen said he runs a school in his native town of Harihara in Davangere district and married Priyanka 18 years ago. The couple has two daughters, including a 17-year-old girl who currently lives with him. According to Praveen, Priyanka came in contact with Mohan after her par-

ents decided to sell a piece of land near Hoskote. Mohan, who was into the real estate business, offered to help facilitate the sale. During this period, Priyanka became close to him and began accompanying him to various places. Praveen further claimed that Priyanka had once referred to Mohan as her former lover. After learning this, he warned Mohan over the phone to stay away from his wife.

DS MAX

Karnataka to consider extending Yellow Line to Attibele

The Karnataka government plans to extend the Namma Metro Yellow Line. It will go beyond Bommasandra towards Attibele.

SOURCE: THE ECONOMIC TIMES, INDIA

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CREDAT

OFF THE MARK

Missing answer scripts to incorrect evaluation, OSM hits rough patch

Lessons for CBSE from K'taka's public universities

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) is under fire for the discrepancies in the On Screen Marking digital evaluation system. Meant to bring in transparency and fasten the evaluation process, it was implemented for the 2026 batch of Class 12.

On May 13, controversy broke out after the announcement of the Class 12 results and several students complained that their answer scripts were not scanned properly. For some students, pages from their answer scripts were missing. A few even complained of incorrect evaluation. The pass percentage dipped from 88.39 last year to 83.29.

State-run institutions in Karnataka have been managing digital evaluation for years now, without giving room for any controversies, something federal bodies like the CBSE can learn from. Some universities dispatch question papers online without any fuss. *DH's Rashmi Belur* explains this and hopes nothing will be jinxed:



VTU sets in motion foolproof system

●The VTU, which manages 200-plus engineering colleges, was India's first university to implement digital evaluation in 2011. It started with outsourced software and migrated to its own unique software in 2016.

●How does it work? To set and dispatch question papers, VTU uses the Question Paper Management Portal and delivers question papers to exam centres online with two-factor authentication. A secure VPN connectivity is established between VTU, Data Centre (DC) and the exam centre. A dedicated 4 MBPS leased line is used for this purpose. Question papers are delivered half an hour before the commencement of exams, and they are downloaded using two-factor authentication.

●For evaluation, the answer scripts are scanned at VTU's Belagavi and Bengaluru campuses. The scanned scripts are stored in a central storage at the Data Centre. The university has 27 evaluation centres across the state where faculty members evaluate using digital evaluation system software. Marks are allotted through QR code.

VIDYASHANKAR S VTU Vice-Chancellor

“Every semester, we manage over 13 lakh answer scripts. No technical glitches are reported in digital evaluation or question paper dispatch. This has put an end to malpractices.

VTU software to BU rescue

●BU adopted digital evaluation by procuring VTU's software in 2018-19. VTU trained BU faculty members on digital evaluation. BU handles answer scripts of 6.5 lakh undergraduate and postgraduate students every semester.

●“This really helped the university to come out of a bad image. Soon after exams, answer scripts are scanned using an in-house system and securely stored. Earlier, we received complaints on wrong marking and totaling,” a BU official said.

RGUHS does it with surgical precision

●The state's lone public medical university adopted a digital examination and evaluation system in 2015. The university has over 1,500 colleges including medical, dental and nursing. It handles 25 lakh students a year.

●RGUHS vice-chancellor Dr B C Bhagavan explained that scanning is done by colleges under surveillance and web streaming. Evaluators are provided a unique ID and their login will be through facial recognition. Answer scripts will be visible to them only after entering their unique ID.

●If the answer scripts are blur, then evaluators can reject them and they get re-scanned. To prevent post-evaluation issues, each script undergoes double evaluation.

DR B C BHAGAVAN RGUHS vice-chancellor

“There were a few glitches in the beginning, but now the system is being praised and running perfectly.

KEA CET(s) example with OMR format

●KEA conducts the all-important Common Entrance Test (CET) for three lakh students eyeing admissions to engineering and other professional courses. It is also entrusted with the task of conducting recruitment exams for various government departments. While KEA dispatches question papers physically, the evaluation is system-based as the question paper is in Optical Mark Recognition (OMR) format.

●After the completion of exams, answer scripts are transported to the central office, scanned and uploaded for evaluation.

●Meanwhile, KEA starts question paper-setting a year before exams. This happens digitally through a question bank. Officials say KEA cannot dispatch question papers digitally as the number of sheets ranges from 30 to 70 and they are bilingual.



KSEAB warm-up with II PU prep exams

●The Board conducts exams for about eight lakh SSLC (Class 10) students and 6.5 lakh second pre-university students. While evaluation is manual, the KSEAB attempted dispatching question papers digitally for PUC-2 preparatory exams.

●“I feel CBSE should not have gone digital with evaluation in one phase. It should have tried it for a few subjects with fewer scripts,” a KSEAB official said.

Audit process still on, committed to transparency: Tourism department

BENGALURU, DHNS

AKRAM PASHA Tourism commissioner

“The audit process is still underway and the draft report remains under examination,” Pasha stated. “...any reference to the contents of the draft report as concluded audit findings would be premature and may not reflect the final outcome of the audit process.

The draft audit report has criticised the department for “significant and systemic deficiencies”, “irregular fund management” and “misutilisation of public funds”. Pasha said the draft report represented preliminary audit observations.

“Every observation contained in the draft audit report has already been

replied to by the department with supporting documentation,” Pasha stated.

“The audit process is still underway and the draft report remains under examination,” Pasha stated. “...any reference to the contents of the draft report as concluded audit findings would be premature and may not reflect the final outcome of the audit process.”

Pasha pointed out that the next stage in the audit process is the exit meeting (yet to be conducted) between his department and the CAG. “Based on the explanations, records and clarifications submitted by the department, several draft observations may undergo modification, revision or deletion in accordance with the established audit process,” he said.

“The Tourism Department is fully cooperating with the audit process,” Pasha stated.

India Foundation for the Arts opens archives for public

BENGALURU, DHNS: The India Foundation for the Arts (IFA) is opening its archives to the public from June 8 to 12 to mark International Archives Week.

Visitors can browse archives from more than 950 projects commissioned by IFA over the past three decades. These include books, films, performances, games, websites, and educational materials centred on community histories, rights, and memory.

Built around this year's theme, “#ArchivesForJustice: Rights, Memory & Futures”, the programme will also feature guided archive walks, workshops on preserving personal archives, and a panel discussion on the role of archives in justice and community memory, particularly when documenting marginalised communities.

Two films, ‘Iqraar-naama’ and ‘Songs of Our Soil’, will also be screened. Entry free. For registration, visit IFA's website (www.indiaifa.org).

Khera, BKH file papers for RS, Council polls

►BENGALURU, DHNS: Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee president B K Hariprasad, along with three other Congress nominees Thippanna Kamakanoor, P V Mohan and B S Shivanna, filed nomination papers for the upcoming Legislative Council elections while Pawan Khera and Mansoor Ali Khan submitted their papers for Rajya Sabha polls, on Saturday.

Hariprasad, Kamakanoor, Mohan and Shivanna are the Congress candi-

dates for the MLC seats.

Khan, Khera and Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge are candidates for the Rajya Sabha seats.

Pro-Zameer protests continue

►BENGALURU, DHNS: Chamarajpet MLA Zameer Ahmed Khan's supporters staged a protest on Saturday demanding his induction into the Cabinet and giving him the post of deputy chief minister.

Scores of Congress workers protested near Sirsi Circle.

Muniyappa seeks DCM post

BENGALURU, DHNS: Senior Congress lawmaker K H Muniyappa on Saturday confirmed having sought a deputy chief ministerial position for himself during his talks with top party leader Rahul Gandhi.

Muniyappa, the food and civil supplies minister, was unhappy with his portfolio and publicly criticised the Congress leadership on Friday for not treating seniors with the respect they deserve. Later, however, Muniyappa said he was “happy” after talks with Rahul.

Asked about wanting to become a deputy CM, Muniyappa said: “I have made an appeal to both Mallikarjun Kharge (Congress president) and Rahul. It's

for them to decide.” “Rahul said he would take care of things. He asked me to continue party work. I've left things to him. He's our supreme leader who knows how seniors should be treated,” Muniyappa said.

Muniyappa, who belongs to the SC (Left) community, is said to have pointed out to the Congress leadership that G Parameshwara from the SC (Right) has been made a deputy CM. This, Muniyappa believes, can send a wrong message to the Dalit community, he is said to have told Rahul. He has also sought a ‘people-facing’ portfolio like social welfare, agriculture or water resources.

Without strong story, film won't work, even if superstar acts in it: Experts

Prajavani Cine Sammana jury meet explores why audiences aren't coming to theatres

BENGALURU, DHNS

“If the story isn't strong, a film won't work. Not even if a superstar acts in it. And if filmmakers cannot persuade people to put down their phones and come to theatres, cinema halls will not survive.”

This was one of the key views expressed during a panel discussion on ‘Why aren't audiences coming to theatres?’, held on Friday as part of the jury meet for the fourth edition of the *Prajavani Kannada Cine Sammana* awards.

The discussion featured actor-director Sindhu Sreenivasa Murthy, OTT marketing expert and producer Niranjana, Robin Theatre owner Thomas D'Souza, director Bengaluru Srinidhi, and producer-distributor Ravichandra. Director K M Chaitanya moderated the session.

The conversation went beyond identifying the reasons for declining theatre attendance and focused on ways to attract audiences back to cinemas. Participants noted that films with strong family-ori-



Actor-director Sindhu Sreenivasa Murthy, OTT marketing expert and producer Niranjana, Robin Theatre owner Thomas D'Souza, director Bengaluru Srinidhi, and producer-distributor Ravichandra participated in a discussion held as part of jury meet for the fourth edition of the Prajavani Kannada Cine Sammana awards, in Bengaluru.



has diminished. Likewise, people who have witnessed film shoots know that action sequences are staged, making fight scenes less of an attraction than before.

The discussion stressed that good films alone are not enough. The theatre experience must also improve. Audiences are more likely to visit cinemas that offer quality sound systems, comfortable seating and adequate parking facilities.

The success of *Aachar & Co* was cited as an example of breaking stereotypes. Instead of portraying women according to preconceived notions of how “women-centric” films should be, the movie depicted women as they are in real life — their joys, desires, ambitions and even selfishness.

Participants suggested that filmmakers similarly push beyond existing boundaries and conventions.

The 2024 film *Blink* was also discussed as a successful example of audience testing. The movie was screened for a limited audience before release to gather feedback. It was initially shown to technicians, who offered only technical suggestions. Ordinary viewers, however, provided insights into what would make the film more engaging. After incorporating that feedback by trimming some portions and adding new scenes, the filmmakers released the movie, which went on to become a success. Speakers expressed confidence that such experiments can help draw audiences back to theatres.

Expelled & Independent MLAs hold the key for 7th candidate

BENGALURU, DHNS

By securing a Legislative Council ticket for his aide Vinay Karthik, Chief Minister D K Shivakumar has intensified the race for the Upper House, setting up a potential showdown with the JD(S) for the crucial seventh seat.

Election to seven Legislative Council seats is scheduled for June 18 and MLAs are the voters.

Each candidate requires a minimum of 28 votes to win. Based on the current party position in the Assembly, Congress can comfortably win four seats, while the BJP can bag two.

A seventh candidate in the fray will make expelled and independent MLAs crucial.

If the JD(S), which is toying with the idea of fielding its former lawmaker B M Farooq, does not put up a fight, then Karthik will be elected unopposed. But Congress is already working out a scenario in which the JD(S) forces an election for the seventh seat.

Congress has 134 MLAs, BJP 62, and JD(S) 18. There are two Independents, one MLA each from the Kalyana Rajya Pragati Paksha (KRPP) and Sarvodaya Karnataka Paksha (SKP). Three expelled BJP MLAs are serving as unattached members, while two seats remain vacant - one due to Congress' Vinay Kulkarni's

Game of Numbers

Congress	134
BJP	62
Expelled BJP MLAs	3
JD(S)	18
Kalyana Rajya Pragati Paksha	1
Sarvodaya Karnataka Paksha	1
Independents	2
Speaker	1
Vacant	2
Total	224

disqualification and another following D Sudhakar's death.

Based on these numbers, Congress can elect four candidates with 28 votes each and still have a surplus of 22 votes. To win the seventh seat, Congress will need six additional votes and manoeuvring is on, sources said.

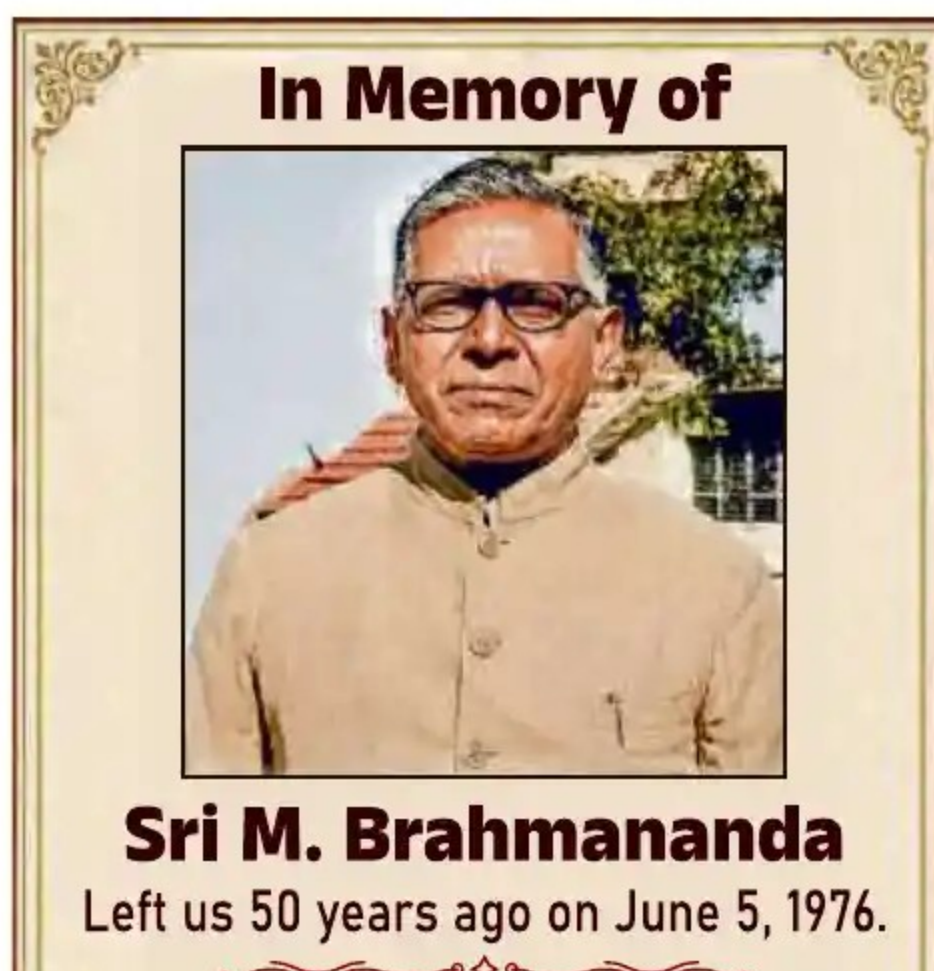
The JD(S), with 18 MLAs, will be short of 10 votes to elect its candidate. Even if ally BJP transfers its six surplus votes, after securing the victory of its two candidates with the required 56 votes, the alliance tally would rise only to 24. JD(S) would still be four votes short. Even if Gali Janardhana Reddy (KRPP) and expelled BJP MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatmal vote for the JD(S) candidate, the alliance would still fall short by two votes.

Even if Congress secures the support of MLAs Shivaram Hebbar and ST Somashekar (expelled from BJP), Darshan Puttannaiah (SKP) and Independents Latha Mallikarjun and KH Puttaswamy Gowda (Independents), it could reach the magic figure of 28 with the Speaker's vote.

The JD(S) also faces the threat of cross-voting. It will have to ensure 18 of its votes remain intact.



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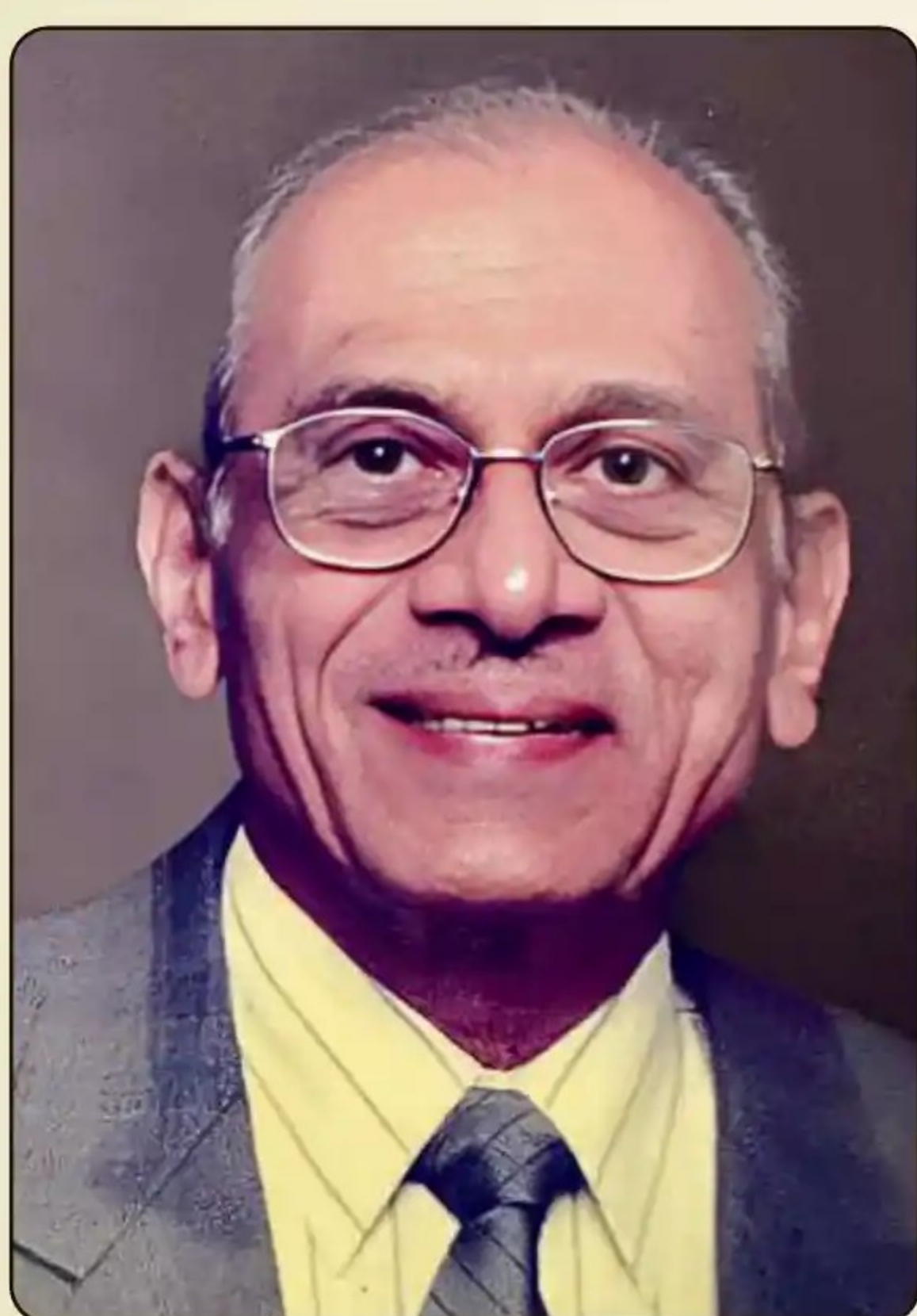
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A man of wisdom, humility and truly kind heart, his legacy will continue to live on in the lives he shaped and the memories he leaves behind.

In grief:
Family & Friends





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Sl. No.	Name of the Work
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2.	Annual maintenance contract of Electrical Crematorium including replacement of Furnace coils. Refactory Materials and Periodical cleaning of Scrubbers using necessary spare parts, Tools and Skilled Man Power etc complete at Banashankari Electric crematorium in Devagiri Temple ward at ward No 190. Estimate Amount : Rs. 30.00 Lakhs, EMD : Rs.60,000.00. Category : General.

Calendar of Events : (1) Tender Forms available for downloading from **08.06.2026**. (2) Last date for submission of Tender Document is **17.06.2026 up to 16.00 Hours**. (3) Date of Opening of Tenders is on **19.06.2026 at 11.00 Hours**.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, (Elect), BWCC

YOUNG WATCHDOGS Students, hobbyists, cybersecurity enthusiasts raise concerns

The plucky teenagers who put CBSE under the scanner

AMRITA MADHUKALYA
NEW DELHI, DHNS

HOW CBSE ROLLED OUT THE SYSTEM

- More than 17 lakh students took the exams
- In all, over 98 lakh answer sheets had to be scanned
- Around January 20-22, barely a month before the exams, a dry run was conducted in five schools
- On February 9, several teachers from CBSE-affiliated and private schools were invited to provide feedback
- On February 13, a webinar was organised for multiple stakeholders, during which they were trained to evaluate answer sheets from 2025

After the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) Class 12 exam results were declared in May this year, the biggest takeaway was that the passing ratio fell by 3 percentage points this time. This was also the first time the board had implemented the on-screen marking (OSM) system.

Had it not been for a few teenagers who refused to let the status quo on how the board functioned, the results would have been just another footnote in history.

But it was not exactly a novelty. India's education system has been a source of discontentment, with a litany of leaks plaguing the sector.

While the UGC-NET was cancelled in 2024 due to a paper leak, the NEET-UG was cancelled this year because the Education Ministry said the exam's integrity had been "compromised", and that the CBI would handle an investigation into the matter.

Soon after, several Class 12 students complained of glitches in the CBSE's OSM system. But it was in the last week of May when two teenagers — 18-year-old Vedant Srivastav and 19-year-old Nisarga Adhikary — put the education system under the scanner.

Youngsters step up
Vedant pointed out that the scanned copy of the answer

sheets provided by the board for reevaluation was not his. In turn, an army of angry trolls called him "Pakistani", only for the CBSE to agree with him a day later.

Soon after, in a thread of posts on social media, Nisarga pointed out several "critical vulnerabilities" in the site hosting the OSM system. Undergraduate student Tirth Parmar, aged 22, found similar issues on the site.

Soon, 18-year-old Sarthak Sidhant made public documents of the tendering process, showing how the CBSE had eased norms to award the tender to a Hyderabad-based company called Coempr Edu Teck, which had a history of unsuccessfully implementing the same OSM system in Telan-



Students and young researchers flagged vulnerabilities in the board's new on-screen marking platform, raising questions about oversight, accountability and exam integrity. PTI FILE PHOTO

gana in 2019. More than 3 lakh students failed that year in the state, with 23 of them ending their lives as a result.

Both Nisarga and Tirth found issues on the login page. Nisarga said he found a "master passkey" in the source code that would allow anyone to access the system and tamper with its data.

Both wrote to the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) and received no response.

Tirth said he, too, could access the database on the site due to a bug, and could change or manipulate the data. "I could access the password and username of several users as well," he said.

When the CBSE finally swung into action, it seemed a little too late. The Education Ministry formed a team drawing from IIT Kanpur and IIT Madras to help plug the leaks.

Eventually, the Central government stepped in to shunt the CBSE chairperson and secretary.

Meanwhile, despite the government measures, the clamour for the education minister's resignation has only grown.

Nisarga said it would have been good to hear the government take accountability. "Ideally, they must take accountability — admit to the mistakes and rectify them. The lives of lakhs of children are on

the line," he said.

Sarthak, who was invited by Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha and Congress MP Rahul Gandhi for a chat, was also summoned by a Parliamentary panel examining these issues. The Jharkhand-based teen told *DH* that while he had an interest in computers and politics, he was "just a student" looking to study technology further. "I have an interest in computers and technology, and in civic matters. I want to pursue computer science, engineering, and civil technology," he said.

Cause for concern

The most striking aspect of the CBSE-OSM controversy was that it was not uncovered by a formal audit, parliamentary oversight, or an internal security review, but by teenagers and young independent researchers who took the time to examine the system.

If vulnerabilities affecting answer sheets, student data, and evaluation processes could be identified by students, hobbyists, and cybersecurity enthusiasts, it raises serious questions about the robustness of the safeguards put in place by one of India's largest education boards.

The CBSE and the Education Ministry may dispute the extent of the risks, but the episode highlights the value of responsible disclosure and the need for institutions to listen to independent researchers before problems become public controversies.

Abhijeet Dipke: The accidental leader

MRITYUNJAY BOSE
MUMBAI, DHNS

Until recently, Abhijeet Dipke was one among lakhs and crores of young Indians struggling with competitive examinations, government recruitment delays and an increasingly difficult job market.

Today, the 30-year-old is the face of a youth movement that has grabbed national attention after launching the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) — a platform that has turned an alleged insult into a symbol of protest.

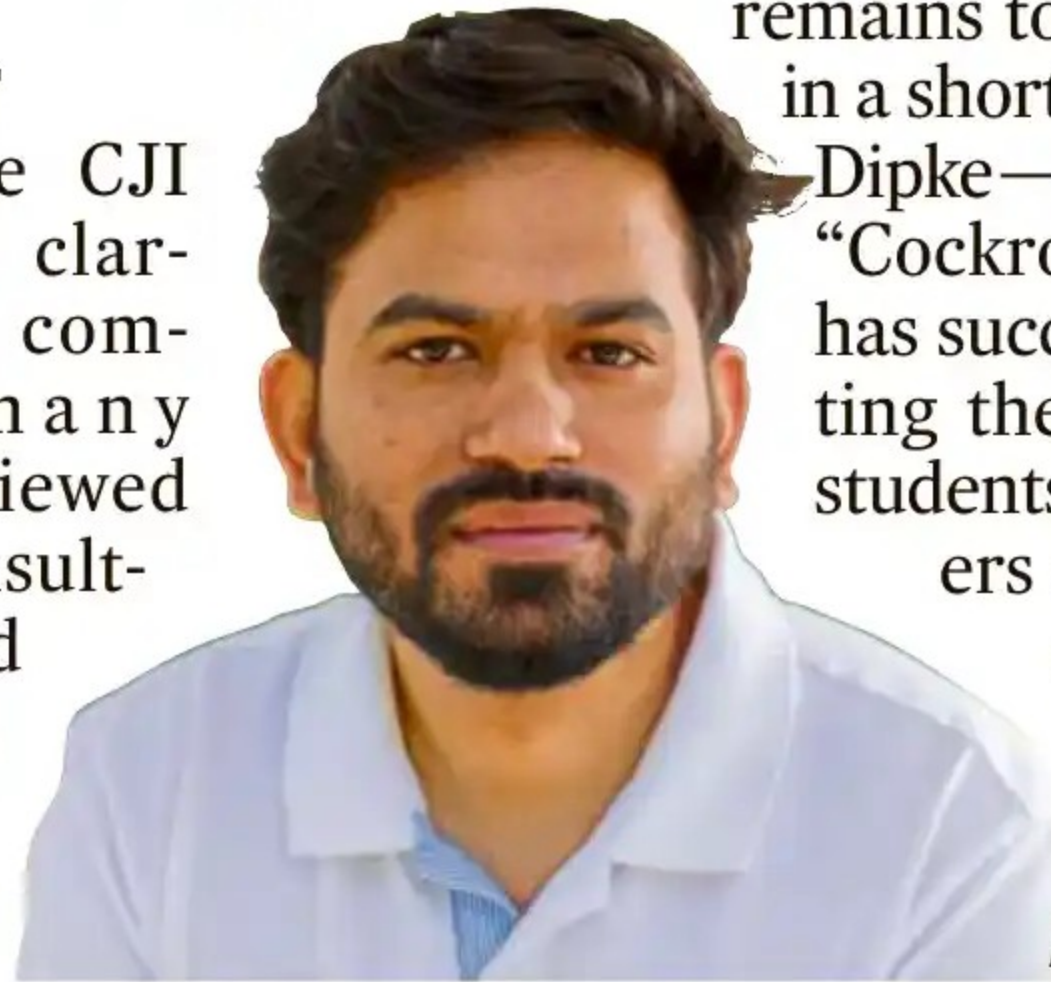
What began as a social media reaction to the "parasites and cockroaches" remarks linked to Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant quickly grew into a wider movement of students and job aspirants frustrated by paper leaks, cancelled examinations, delayed recruitment and lack of employment opportunities.

In a country where competitive exams shape the future of lakhs, Dipke appears to have tapped into the growing anger among young people.

When Dipke arrived at New Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport from Boston this week, supporters gave him a hero's welcome. Political parties and government agencies watched his return closely. Though the movement is a few weeks old, its rapid rise has surprised many.

The trigger

Though the CJI eventually clarified his comments, many students viewed them as insulting. Instead of rejecting the label, Dipke embraced it.



Abhijeet Dipke.

"They said cockroaches would never come to the ground," he wrote on X on Saturday as the protests gathered momentum.

For his supporters, the cockroach has become a symbol of survival and resilience. Social media has played a key role in spreading the message, with Dipke's interviews and posts attracting crores of views over the past two weeks.

A native of Maharashtra's Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar district, Dipke graduated in journalism from Pune. He earned a master's degree in Public Relations from Boston University.

Before launching CJP, Dipke worked in political communications. Between 2020 and 2023, he helped AAP with social-media campaigns and digital outreach.

The prologue

People familiar with his work say CJP's rise reflected the growing influence of a new generation of political organisers who understand the language, humour and frustrations of young Indians online.

Unlike traditional student bodies linked to political parties, CJP presents itself as an independent youth platform. Its first major campaign focuses on the NEET-UG controversy.

Whether CJP develops into a lasting political force remains to be seen. But in a short span of time, Dipke — the self-styled "Cockroach Man" — has succeeded in putting the concerns of students and jobseekers at the centre of the national conversation.

Students, parents rally over education woes

Seek greater political accountability

NEW DELHI, PTI

School students, college-goers, competitive exam aspirants and parents were among those who gathered at Jantar Mantar here on Saturday for a protest organised by Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) supporters, with many saying concerns over the education system had brought them to the demonstration.

The crowds started assembling from Saturday morning, and swelled through the day.

Several participants said recurring controversies around examinations, uncertainty over results and a lack of accountability from authorities had shaken their confidence in the system. Some also expressed disappointment with both the ruling BJP and the Opposition parties, saying issues affecting the youth were not receiving adequate attention.

Parents accompanying children said the concerns extend beyond students. Nusrat Parveen, who attended the protest with her three daughters, said: "My children are worried



Supporters gather during a protest by Cockroach Janta Party demanding the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over alleged examination-related lapses at the Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on Saturday. PTI

about their future and, as a parent, I feel that pressure too."

Her daughters, Razda, a graduation student, and Iqra, who is in Class 11, said students regularly discussed concerns over examinations and admissions. "Education has become a way of earning money," Razda said, while Iqra spoke of the uncertainty.

Their sister Zikra said students often map out their future based on expected results, only to face more uncertainty. "We calculated our scores and were thinking about colleges. Then we learnt that the paper

was cancelled," she said.

Some participants had broader concerns about opportunities for youngsters. Vaishali, who works with an NGO in Delhi, said India frequently speaks about its demographic dividend but is not adequately addressing its youth's concerns. "We have the highest number of youngsters... We need constructive change," she said.

Sabrina, a law student from Kashmir who attended the protest with her younger brother, said she had come to support students raising their

concerns. "If more people raise their voice together, it is more likely to be heard," she said.

Many participants also framed their concerns in political terms. Saurabh Gurjar, who travelled from Gwalior by bus to take part in the protest, said youngsters were increasingly looking for alternative parties. "What is happening with students is wrong. Those who study are left behind, while those who pay money get through," he alleged, adding that he would support the CJP if it eventually enters electoral politics.

Nabin: Some forces pushing youths towards 'negative politics'

RANCHI, PTI: BJP president Nitin Nabin on Saturday alleged that some forces were trying to push the country's youths towards "negative politics".

In an apparent reference to CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke, he said, "Some people sitting abroad assume they can give directions to the youths of India."

"Today's youths want to work towards nation-building and secure their future. But some forces are trying to make the country's youths anti-establishment," Nabin said.

"Those who want to push the youths of this country towards negative politics, I warn them that the youths of India will choose positive politics," Nabin said. People have the right to oppose, but within democratic norms, he said. He said the country's youths are known for innovation and creation.



Nitin Nabin

Quirky posters hold mirror to India's education system

SHEMIN JOY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The 'cockroach' protest in the Capital seeking Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation witnessed a motley gathering that sought justice and reforms in the system through witty posters that were a terse commentary on the current situation in the country.

A couple of them twisted Communist Manifesto's iconic line 'working men of all countries, unite' to "Plumbers of the country, unite. Too many leaks in the Education Ministry to fix", another poster read, "we asked for Make in India, you gave us Leak in India".

Rishikesh, pursuing PhD at JNU and holding a poster about plumbers, told *DH*, "I used to teach Physics and Mathematics to students appearing for exams like NEET. I know their troubles. How can I sit at my hostel when these things are happening?"

Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, whose 'cockroach' comment triggered the satirical CJP movement, too found a

mention at Jantar Mantar where a poster read, "To Chief Justice of India, With Love, Get Well Soon".

One poster referred to Manipur, saying, "M se 'Melody' yaad aaya, M se Manipur bhool gaya (M made you remember Melody but not Manipur)". It was an allusion to Prime Minister Narendra Modi gifting 'Melody' toffees to his Italian counterpart Giorgia Meloni.

'Indian Paper Leak'

'IPL' (Indian Premier League) found a new moniker, Indian Paper Leak, with the protesters giving purple cap (given to the highest wicket taker) to Modi and orange cap (given to the highest run getter) to Pradhan.

One poster read, "waiting for government exam that does not leak" while another said, "Hume Nyay Chahiye, Chuppi Nahi (with Modi's photo, seeking justice and not silence)".

Virender Singh, whose son has to re-appear for NEET-UG exam, said, "My son got only 62% in CBSE exams. It is double whammy for us."

Judicial strength lies in accountability, not infallibility, says CJI

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS



CJI Surya Kant

Chief Justice of India Surya Kant has emphasised that public trust in the judiciary is not automatic but must be continuously earned through transparency, consistency and the willingness to self-correct.

Speaking at Queen Mary University of London on June 5, the CJI addressed students and faculty at an event organised by the Centre for Commercial Law. The discussion centred on the theme 'The Contribution of Indian Courts to Global Constitutional Jurisprudence'.

Responding to a question on the judiciary's role in sustaining public trust in constitutional democracy, Justice Surya Kant said institutions derive their strength not from

projecting infallibility but from remaining open to learning and correction. "Public trust is never simply given to an institution. It is earned, continuously, through transparency, consistency and the courage to be self-correcting," he said.

Judicial strength does not come from the appearance of infallibility. Institutions grow stronger when they remain open to learning and correction. In a constitutional democracy, the judiciary is the last line of accountability, but it must itself be accountable to the Constitution, and to the people it serves, he said.

On the most important role

of the judiciary in a modern democracy, the CJI asserted that courts must transform constitutional principles from mere words on parchment into living guarantees of liberty for every citizen. He added that the judiciary also serves as a stabilising force during periods of social discord, balancing change with constitutional morality.

The CJI said: "The judiciary must not only be the guardian of rights, it must be accessible enough for that guardianship to be real. A court that protects rights only for those who can afford to litigate is not fulfilling its constitutional function."

When asked what justice meant to him personally, CJI described it as a nuanced balance rather than mere mechanical application of rules.

For J&K's nomads, familiar paths grow uncertain

ZULFIKAR MAJID
SRINAGAR, DHNS

Unseasonal snowfall in the higher reaches of Jammu and Kashmir has disrupted the annual seasonal migration of Gujar and Bakerwal nomadic pastoralists, delaying movement, stranding families and adding fresh uncertainty to one of the region's oldest livelihood systems.

The Gujar and Bakerwal communities migrate twice a year, moving with their livestock to high mountain pastures of Kashmir in summer for grazing and returning to the lower plains of Jammu in winter to escape the cold.

This centuries-old movement across forest and mountain terrain is central to their survival, as they depend almost entirely on sheep, goats and horses.

This seasonal cycle has been



Blocked mountain routes have delayed the annual migration of Gujar & Bakerwal herders and put livestock at risk. PTI FILE

increasingly disturbed this year after sudden snowfall in the Pir Panjal mountain range blocked key migration corridors, including routes near Peer Ki Gali and the Mughal Road.

Families travelling from Rajouri and Poonch districts of Jammu region toward summer pastures in Kashmir were forced to stop mid-journey, often leaving livestock exposed to freezing conditions without proper shelter.

For many herders, the disruption has turned a routine journey into an uncertain struggle.

Talib Hussain, a member of the Gujar community, said the changing conditions have made survival increasingly difficult. "The journey itself has become increasingly uncertain. Livestock-based live-

hoods are also under strain," he said.

Experts say such disruptions are also forcing pastoralists to shift away from traditional mountain trails and rely on motorable roads when routes close due to snow or landslides.

While this offers an alternative, it creates new risks for animals not adapted to traffic-heavy routes.

Irfan Ali Banka, an anthropologist studying pastoral systems in the region, explained the consequences of this shift: "This forced change in route comes with significant risks, as abandoning the mountain paths for the main road frequently leaves livestock at risk of road accidents, exhaustion, stress and exposure to unfamiliar terrain."

Climate experts, meanwhile, point out that the core issue is no longer just snowfall intensity but its timing and unpredictability.

India world's fastest-growing economy: Rajnath

LUCKNOW, PTI: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Saturday said that at a time when many countries are facing economic uncertainty, India continues to stand out as the "world's fastest-growing major economy".

In a post on X, Rajnath Singh said, "India's economy grew by 7.7% in FY 2025-26, with growth accelerating to 7.8% in the fourth quarter, underscoring its resilience and underlying strength built over the last 12 years through the mantra of Reform, Perform and Transform."

Abhishek in Delhi amid TMC revolt speculation

Move comes ahead of I.N.D.I.A bloc meet tomorrow

KOLKATA, PTI

Trinamool Congress national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee travelled to Delhi on Saturday as the party leadership grappled with growing indications that the rebellion, which cost it control of its legislature wing in the West Bengal Assembly, could spread to Parliament.



TMC lawmaker Abhishek Banerjee.

PARTY TURMOIL

- Abhishek's visit comes ahead of Mamata Banerjee's scheduled trip for I.N.D.I.A bloc meeting
- The two were originally expected to travel together on Sunday
- Visit comes amid reports that dissident TMC leaders are trying to replicate Assembly-like rebellion in Parliament
- The party has 28 Lok Sabha MPs, and the rebel group would need 19 MPs to avoid disqualification

The visit, a day before Mamata Banerjee's scheduled trip to the national capital for an I.N.D.I.A-bloc meeting, triggered speculations amid reports of efforts to engineer a split in the TMC's parliamentary ranks.

According to the original schedule, Mamata and Abhishek were expected in Delhi together on Sunday for the Opposition bloc's meeting.

Leaders and observers view the change of plans as a possible attempt by the TMC leadership to take stock of the situation before Monday's meeting.

TMC sources said the party's supreme body asked her nephew to leave a day early. Party leaders, however, appeared uncertain about his engagements in Delhi on Sunday. "I am not in Delhi or Kolkata now. I haven't heard about any meeting," a TMC MP, who did not wish to be named, said when asked about the visit.

The trip coincided with growing reports of efforts by dissident TMC leaders and MPs to replicate in Parliament what has already happened in the Assembly.

Only a few days ago, more than two-thirds of TMC MLAs — 58 out of 80 — broke away from the party's official legislature wing and secured recognition as the principal Opposition bloc under expelled MLA Ritabrata Banerjee, dealing one of the biggest organisational setbacks to Mamata since she founded the party in 1998.

The rebellion, directed largely against Abhishek's growing influence in the organisation, was informally christened "Operation Crown Prince" by dissident leaders.

"I think a similar development is happening in New Delhi in the parliamentary party. This is happening because of the high-handedness of Abhishek," rebel TMC MLA and deputy leader of the party's new legislative wing Sandipan Saha said.

The TMC currently has 28 members in the Lok Sabha. Under anti-defection provisions, a group with the support of 19 MPs would have to stake a claim without attracting disqualification. The party has 13 MPs in the Rajya Sabha.

Sources familiar with the developments claimed efforts were underway to mobilise support among MPs in both Houses of Parliament.

TVK on cloud nine after AIADMK leaders switch sides

Four former ministers and five ex-legislators join ruling party

E T B SIVAPRIYAN
CHENNAI, DHNS

Four former AIADMK ministers and five former MLAs from different regions of the state joined the Tamilaga Vetti Kazhagam (TVK) on Saturday, continuing the migration to the ruling party.

M C Sampath from Cuddalore, Kadambur Raju (Kovilpatti), Udumalai K Radhakrishnan (both Tiruppur) and N R Sivapathi (Tiruchirapalli) joined the TVK with their supporters. Former DMK MLA from T Nagar, J Karunanithi, also joined TVK along with the

five ex-AIADMK legislators.

This is yet another setback to AIADMK, which is already smarting from its worst-ever defeat in the April 23 Assembly elections. Last month, four of its MLAs resigned to join TVK, bringing down AIADMK's tally in the Assembly to 43.

Sampath, Radhakrishnan and Raju lost the recently concluded Assembly polls, and their induction into TVK is expected to strengthen the ruling party in their respective zones.

Sources told *DH* that Sampath is a respected leader in the Vanniyar-dominated Cuddalore district while Raju and Radhakrishnan have held several positions in the party in southern and western regions.

"We don't induct everyone who comes knocking on our door. We are very clear that we want to induct people who will help us expand our reach," a senior TVK leader said.

Welcoming the leaders on Saturday, Public Works Minister Aadhav Arjuna said there was little difference between TVK and AIADMK and invited more functionaries from the latter to join the former.

Arjuna has emerged as one of the key TVK leaders and his role in getting the four AIADMK MLAs was significant. TVK said over 300 people who held several positions in AIADMK and other parties joined the outfit on Saturday.

Sampath said they feel Vijay will continue the "good work" of the AIADMK government led by Jayalithaa, while Radhakrishnan said they were relieved to join the ruling party.

"We respect madam J Jayalithaa, and we will continue her work. Our leader has already said that he likes Kalaignar M Karunanidhi. We will welcome supporters of Kalaignar too," Arjuna said.

Take vow to end Vijay-led regime: Stalin to cadres

CHENNAI, PTI: DMK president M K Stalin on Saturday asserted that TVK is in power in Tamil Nadu only due to the benevolence of his party and its allies, and urged his party workers to take a pledge to put a full stop to Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay-led government.

Welcoming more than 1,000 AIADMK workers, Stalin traced the party's history since its founding in 1949 and underlined that his party opposed the imposition of Emergency in 1975, knowing fully well that it would lead to the dismissal of the government. In 1976, DMK government was dismissed and till 1989, the party could not win polls and form the government, he said, and recalled the ups and downs seen by the party till it formed the government yet again in 2021.

The former CM said the reason for him recalling all that is



Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay with DMK president M K Stalin. PTI FILE

to underscore that victory and defeat will alternate. He said: "That is why we are proving today that a DMK member is someone who neither goes wild chasing victory, nor loses heart and gives up when facing defeat, but continues to work forever."

It is in this situation, when the party has lost the opportunity to win and when it works as the principal opposition, so many have joined the party

under the leadership of Gajal alias Gajendran, AIADMK Kattankolathur-North Union Secretary, who fought Assembly polls from the Chengelpet constituency as the candidate of that party, he said.

Further, Stalin said: "You have no reason to worry. You must not forget that the current regime is functioning only due to our grace (favour/benevolence). We (the DMK-led alliance) faced the election with the determination that we must win; the government must be formed under the leadership of the DMK... It is only with the grace of the parties that were in our alliance that this government is functioning today."

"Let us take a pledge in this event to put a full stop to this government which is functioning due to our benevolence," he added.

Drama at Rabri Devi's home as RJD leaders 'guard' gate

PATNA, PTI

A high drama was witnessed at the residence of former Bihar chief minister Rabri Devi on Saturday when several RJD leaders stood guard, claiming their leader has "returned" her security cover in protest against "shabby" treatment from the NDA government.



RJD workers stand guard at the entrance of party leaders and former Bihar chief ministers Lalu Prasad and Rabri Devi's residence, in Patna, on Saturday. PTI

The development came close on the heels of the allotment of 10, Circular Road, a government bungalow which Rabri Devi has been occupying for two decades, in favour of BJP leader and minister Nand Kishor Ram.

The former CM, who has refused to move to 39, Hardinge Road, allotted to her in her capacity as the leader of the opposition in the state legislative council, received yet another snub from the government earlier this week when the security cover enjoyed by her entire family was downgraded.

"It is all just a ploy by the BJP-led government to humiliate our leaders Lalu ji, Rabri ji and Tejashwi ji. They have all returned their security cover. But the ruling dispensation could not care less as it would like our leaders to be killed,"

alleged RJD spokesperson Shakti Singh Yadav, who was among the first party leaders to take a seat in front of the gate.

"Henceforth, RJD workers will take it upon themselves to ensure that our leaders are out of harm's way. I am here as a man responsible for their security. I will be joined by many of my colleagues," he said.

RJD leader Abha Lata, who turned up at 10, Circular Road later in the day, did a video chat with Rabri Devi, and showed her the crowd that was standing at the gate.

Speaking to reporters, Abha Lata said, "We condemn the actions of Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary, who has cut his

teeth under Rabri Devi but is now out to humiliate her. I have told madam that she must not worry. Her husband and son may be away. But she is not alone."

Notably, Rabri Devi's husband Lalu Prasad, the RJD president whom she had succeeded as Bihar CM in 1997, is away in Singapore for medical treatment. Their younger son Tejashwi Yadav, the RJD's second-in-command, was said to be in Delhi.

Meanwhile, the ruling NDA frowned upon the "pressure politics" by the opposition party and claimed all the recent steps with regard to the RJD's proverbial first family were taken "in accordance with rules".

Hours after drone attacks, Lokesh makes investment pitch in Russia

S N V SUDHIR
HYDERABAD, DHNS

St Petersburg may have just hosted its own 'Davos moment' but Ukrainian drone strikes on the city's outskirts did not deter Team Andhra Pradesh.

Led by IT Minister Nara Lokesh, the delegation pressed ahead with its investment mission, becoming the only state delegation from India to attend the St Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF) this year.

Hours before international guests arrived for the forum's opening ceremony on Friday, Ukrainian long-range drones struck oil storage facilities, a naval base and a guided-missile corvette in the city after Russian air defences failed to intercept them.

"This was a drone strike aimed at derailing the summit and frightening international participants," a senior member of the Andhra delegation told *DH* from Russia.

"We were on our way to the airport in Moscow on June 3 when it happened. Lokesh immediately decided we would go ahead; meetings had been committed, investors were waiting, and backing out would have been unprofessional. The

embassy agreed with our decision. Andhra Pradesh ended up being the only state delegation from India at SPIEF. It has worked very well for us, and it shows Lokesh's commitment," another team member told *DH* from Russia.

Lokesh used the forum to make an ambitious pitch for a new generation of India-Russia economic partnerships.

Speaking at the India-Russia Business Forum on the sidelines of SPIEF, he invited Russian companies in space, energy, aerospace and technology to make Andhra Pradesh their preferred investment destination.

Lokesh positioned Andhra Pradesh as a key contributor to the \$100 billion bilateral trade target set jointly by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Putin, to be achieved by 2030.

Describing the India-Russia relationship as one built on trust that holds firm when the world is uncertain, he argued that the two nations had moved well beyond diplomatic symbolism with investments, energy partnerships, and advanced technology cooperation now generating tangible industrial value.



Nara Lokesh

9 killed after pick-up vehicle collides with truck in Punjab

FEROZEPUR, PTI: Nine people, including four women and a minor girl, were killed and 18 others injured when a pick-up vehicle they were travelling in collided with a truck near Janga Wala Mour on the Ferozepur-Fazilka road on Saturday.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed grief over the incident and announced an ex gratia of Rs 2 lakh from the Prime Minister National Relief Fund (PMNRF) for the next of kin of each deceased and Rs 50,000 for the injured.

As many as 32 people, including women and children, were going from Jallalabad to Beas in Amritsar to immerse the ashes of a relative in the Beas river, when their vehicle met with an accident.

Many of them died on the spot, and the severely injured were brought to Civil Hospital in Ferozepur.

Anshpreet Singh (12), who survived the accident with minor injuries, said he was going with his family members to immerse the remains of his grandmother, Pooro Bai (62).

KARNATAKA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED
(CIN:U40109KA1999SGC025521)

TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through KPP Portal only)

KPTCL invites tenders against Bid Enquiry Nos. for the following works.

No. SEE/TR(Op)/Circle-South/EE(O)/JE-1/F-393(9)/26-27/1089-92 Date:04.06.2026

KPTCL/SEE/TR(Op)/Cir-South/EE(O)/AEE-2/JE-1/25-26/EPR-26 Call-2 Dt:26.03.2026 for "Design, Manufacture, Testing and Supply of Copper Control cable of sizes 4Cx4 sq.mm and 2Cx2.5 sq.mm, required at various sub-stations in Tr(Op) Circle-South, KPTCL, Bengaluru conforming to Technical Specifications. F.O.R.D at Store/Site basis, including insurance, transportation and unloading".

No. SEE/TR(Op)/Circle-South/EE(O)/AEE-2/26-27 EPR-14 /1093-95 Date:04.06.2026

KPTCL/SEE/TR(M)/S-Circle/EE(O)/AEE-2/25-26/EPR-14/Call-7 Dt:09.09.2025 for "Upgradation of protection system at 220kV station, BWSSB, Tataguni, Kanakapura Road, Bengaluru on Turnkey Basis on Percentage Basis" pertains to Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board, Bengaluru".

No. SEE/TR(Op)/Circle-South/EE(O)/JE-1/F-393(5)/26-27/1111-14 Date:04.06.2026

KPTCL/SEE/TR(Op)/Cir-South/EE(O)/AEE-4/JE-1/26-27/EPR-06 Dt:02.06.2026 for "Design, Manufacture, Supply, Testing, Erection and Commissioning of 110V, 15A Float, 30A Boost Battery Charger, required at various sub-stations under Transmission (Operations) Circle-South, Bengaluru conforming to Technical Specifications. F.O.R.D at Store/Site basis, including insurance, transportation and unloading".

No. SEE/TR(Op)/Circle-South/EE(O)/AEE-2/26-27/F-310(10)/1115-16 Date:04.06.2026

KPTCL/SEE/TR(Op)/S-Circle/EE(O)/AEE-2/26-27/EPR-01/Call-1 Dt:08.04.2026 for "Supply, erection, testing, commissioning of Nitrogen Injection fire extinguishing system for 20MVA Power Transformer with required control cable etc with 220V DC control at 220/66/11kV Somanahalli Receiving station pertaining to Somanahalli Operation Division in Bengaluru South Taluk, Bengaluru Urban District on Total Turnkey on Percentage Basis."

The bids will be received through KPP Portal only. The detailed notification regarding the subject enquiry can be obtained by logging onto KPTCL website <https://kptcl.karnataka.gov.in> with hyperlink "E Procurement KPTCL" or KPPP website <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in> or on or after 08.06.2026. Further details can be had from the office of the undersigned during office hours.

Sd/- Superintending Engineer, (Elec.),
Transmission (Operation) Circle-South KPTCL,
Ground Floor, Office Complex, A.R. Circle, Bengaluru.

**ASSISTANT CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS,
SOCIAL FORESTRY DIVISION RAICHUR**
No:ACF/SFDR/KPPP.Proc.Tender/CR- /2026-27 Date: 04-06-2026

e-Tender Notification
(ಎರಡನೇಯ ಹಾರ್ವಿ)

This is to inform to the the public that, for the Financial Year 2026-27. Assistant Conservator of Forests, Social Forestry Division, Raichur has invited Tender for Forest Works through e-Procurement (Website Link <http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>) two cover system under KFDF Flixli Fund-132, Schemes. During 2026-27 Registered Forest Contractors are eligible for Tender Works. Tender From 04-06-2026 to 16-06-2026 & 17-06-2026 Technical Bids and 18-06-2026 Financial Bid Opening.

For More Details available on the notice board. O/o Assistant Conservator of Forests, Social Forestry Division, Raichur.

**Sd/- Assistant Conservator of Forests,
Social Forestry Division, Raichur**
DIP/RCR/102/KSMC&A/104/2026-27

RASHTRIYA MILITARY SCHOOL, BELGAUM-590009
(Govt of India, Ministry of Defence)

REQUIREMENT OF TEACHERS ON CONTRACTUAL BASIS

- Principal, Rashtriya Military School, Belgaum invites applications from interested and eligible candidates for the following teaching post purely on contractual basis

Sl. No.	Posts	No. of posts/ Subject	Educational Qualification	Salary
(a)	Master Gazetted (Equivalent to PGT)	01 Post of Computer Science	(I) Master's degree in the concerned subject with B.Ed from a recognized university. (ii) 3 years teaching experience in secondary or senior secondary schools	Consolidated pay of Rs. 30,000/- per month for each post,

- Interested candidates fulfilling the above qualification are requested to apply on or before 22 June 2026 along with resume/bio-data with mobile number & Xerox copies of testimonials.
- Short listed candidates will be called for Written Test followed by Interview subsequently.

Sd/-
PRINCIPAL

NOTE: The decision of the School authorities will be final & binding in all respect.

Government of Karnataka.

TOWN MUNICIPAL COUNCIL HUMNABAD DIST: BIDAR
Website :WWW.humnabadtown.mrc.gov.inE-Mail : itstaff_ulb_humnabad@yahoo.com
Ph No: 08483-271722, Pin 585330

No. TMC/HBD/Amrut 2.0/Lake/2025-26/07

Dated :-03/06/2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION

1) Name of work REJUVENATION AND DEVELOPMENT WORK OF SURVEY NO 303 BUGGI BASAVANNA VANJARI LAKE IN HUMNABAD TALUKA Amrut 2.0 (DMA/2026-27/OW/WORK_INDENT58085) , 2) Estimated cost As per e-portal, 3) Eligibility of Agency / Consultant As per e-portal, 4) EMD amount As per e-portal, 5) Pre bid meeting date **29-06-2026 at 11.00 AM**, 6) Last date for submission of tender **06-07-2026 upto 5.00 PM**, 7) Technical bid opening **07-07-2026 at 5.30 PM**, 8) Address for communication Chief Officer Humnabad TOWN MUNICIPAL COUNCIL HUMNABAD 08482-229332: itstaff_ulb_humnabad@yahoo.com, 9) Website <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>

Sd/- Chief Officer,
TMC Humnabad

DIPR/Bidar/49/KSMC&A/2026-27

KRISHNA BHAGYA JALA NIGAM LIMITED
(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
Office of the Executive Engineer, KBJNL, Dam Safety Unit-2, Almatti- 586201.
Tq: Nidagundi, Dist: Vijayapura E-mail: dam_division@rediffmail.com
No: KBJNL/DDA/DB/2026-27/457 Dated:04.06.2026

SHORT TERM QUOTATION

Requesting to submit the quotation rates for the following work related to the maintenance of Herkal South LIS Headwork. The details of the works are as follows:

Sl.No	Name of Work
1	Providing and Grouting (Water proofing) of Aqueduct including trough joint from Chainage 6.70Km to 8.20Km of west main canal under Herkal south LIS.
2	Overhauling, servicing of EOT Crane 14 Ton and 7 ton Capacity and replace requisite spare parts at Herkal South and Herkal North LIS Headwork.
3	Overhauling, servicing, and replacement of damaged Bowl Assembly for 16" VMF 2 three stage pump including impellers for Pump No:4 and Thrust Bearing and requisite spares for Pump No:4 and 5 at Herkal South LIS.

For further details it is requested to visit the undersigned office personally and get the details of work. The quotations should be submitted in sealed cover or by mail. The last date submission of quotation is on **Dated: 10.06.2026 at 5-00 PM.**
Contact e-mail Address: dam_division@rediffmail.com
Contact Phone Number: 1. Sri Naveena K E, Assistant Engineer, **Contact. No. 9164812675**

Sd/- Executive Engineer,
KBJNL, Dam Safety Unit-2, Almatti

ಮಾಸಂಇ/ವಿಜಯಪುರ/135/ಕೆಎಸ್ಎಂಸಿಎ/2026-27

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
(Public Works Department)
**Office of the Executive Engineer,
Public Works Department, Division: Yadgir.**
GSTIN:29BLR002252F1DR

No.EE/PWD/Divn/YDG/TS-1/e-Tender/2026-27/ 582 Dated: 05-06-2026

Short Term e-Tender Notification

1) Details of works: On behalf of Governor of Karnataka as per KTPP Amendment 1999-2000 Act 2000 Standard Bid Document KW-4 Karnataka Public Works Department invited item Rate Tender under KPPP Portal in Two Cover System from Eligible Agency/Contractors for following works Under Appendix-E and KRDC for the year 2025-26 Under Shorapur Taluka-(1)36080, (2)36263, (3)36265 And (4)28760/Call-2, Total 4 (Four) works Tender Called **2) Amount Put to Tender :Minimum Rs 200.00 Lakhs and Maximum Rs.400.00 Lakhs 3) Contractor Eligible Details:** Civil Class-III & Above **4) Tender Processing Fee and EMD Details:** Tender Fee, EMD & Period as per kppp portal, **5) Last Date & Time for Tender Pre-Bid Meeting:** 12.06.2026 (11.30 hrs Onwards) (For KW-4 Works Only) **6) Last Date & Time for Tender queries/Clarification:** 15.06.2026 (Upto 17.30 hrs) **7) Last Date & Time for Receipt of the tender in e-KPPP portal:**17.06.2026 (Upto 16.00 hrs) **8) Date & Time of Opening of the Tender/Technical Bid:**19.06.2026 (11.30 hrs Onwards) **9) Date & Time of Opening of the Financial Bid:** 22.06.2026 (11.30 hrs Onwards) **10) For More Details Contact:** Office of the Executive Engineer, PWD Division:Yadgir. **11) Website Address:**<https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>
NOTE: Any Corrections / Changes will be updated in the kppp Portal only

Sd/- Executive Engineer,
PWD Division, Yadgir.

DIP/YDG/103/KSMC&A/2026-27

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE River water-sharing issue remains central to bilateral relations

India-B'desh ties face crucial test as Ganges treaty nears expiry

SREERADHA DATTA

The water-sharing issue has emerged as a critical global concern and, in the context of India-Bangladesh relations, it assumes strategic and developmental importance. At the same time, the issue generates strong emotions and persistent anxieties about the future, particularly in Bangladesh. As two predominantly agrarian economies, both neighbours are dependent on adequate and predictable water supplies. For Bangladesh, the lower riparian state linked to India through 54 shared rivers, the question of transboundary water sharing remains one of the most critical and enduring issues in the bilateral relationship.

Water sharing assumes greater salience in the present cold bilateral situation. Ever since the dramatic political shifts in Bangladesh in August 2024 led to the fall of the 15-year-old Awami League government led by Sheikh Hasina, Indo-Bangladeshi ties have remained tepid. Despite the BNP government's three months in power under Tarique Rahman, Delhi has yet to take any discernible steps towards restoring its previous relationship with Dhaka. While the full resumption of Indian visa services, the restarting of cross-border connectivity corridors and trade activities are all awaited by Bangladesh, the renewal of the Ganges water treaty remains the priority.

The Ganges water-sharing agreement of December 1996 was a watershed event that removed a major irritant between the two neighbours for the next 30 years. Without any automatic renewal provision, negotiations for a new treaty are underway as the end of the treaty period this December inches closer. Ganges water sharing had been a subject of prolonged bilateral discussion



An aerial view of receding waters of the Ganga river amid rising temperatures on a hot summer day in Prayagraj on Thursday. PTI

for several years, especially after the early 1980s. However, the breakthrough came with the arrival of the Sheikh Hasina government in Dhaka in 1996. The agreement improved upon the previous 1975 Farakka accord and resulted from significant Indian concessions, marking the beginning of a friendly phase in Indo-Bangladeshi relations.

The Ganges is the longest river in India and becomes the Padma after entering Bangladesh. It provides water to Kushtia, Jessore and Khulna districts, as well as surrounding areas. A water-sharing treaty is not merely about the total volume of water available; it is about ensuring a predictable and reliable share of that water for both signatories, India and Bangladesh. The assured water supply helps tide over the lean season stretching from January to May, including a period of 8-12 weeks when the region suffers severe water scarcity. Understandably, climate change, glacial retreat and upstream water use in India's states have reduced dry-sea-

son flows, making allocations harder to meet.

Interestingly, despite opposition voices in Bangladesh against the treaty, there has never been a request for a review, despite such a mechanism being built into the agreement. Indeed, apart from other provisions, including emergency consultations, the "minimum release assurance" was an Indian commitment to allowing a specified minimum quantity of water to flow downstream from the Farakka Barrage towards Bangladesh, even during periods of low river flow, while also providing for India's legitimate local water requirements during the specified period.

As the expiry of the existing treaty approaches, discussions on the upcoming Ganges agreement are being conducted under the structured bilateral mechanisms that are in place, as reiterated by Indian Foreign Ministry officials. Two Joint Committee meetings have already taken place. The committee's accumulated data is likely to form the technical basis for renewal negotiations.

These discussions are then taken forward to the Joint Rivers Commission, leading to bilateral government-level negotiations before renewal takes place through mutual consent.

While the non-extradition of former Prime Minister Hasina has emerged as a recent political challenge, the absence of agreements on the sharing of other common rivers remains an underlying obstacle to a stable and enduring bilateral partnership. Many Bangladeshis feel shortchanged on this issue because, despite the Joint Communiqué of 2010 endorsing the principle of basin-wide agreements as the framework for future water-sharing arrangements, there has been negligible progress. The failure to conclude a water-sharing agreement on the Teesta River has also weakened confidence in India's intentions.

Originating in Sikkim, the Teesta River flows through West Bengal before entering Bangladesh via the Rangpur district and eventually merging with the Brahmaputra. Given that approximately 86% of the

basin lies within India, West Bengal expressed disagreement over the assured-flow formula proposed earlier. Although Teesta flows have not been restricted despite the absence of an agreement, concerns persist regarding adequate flows during the lean season.

As a mitigation measure, Bangladesh designed the Teesta River Comprehensive Management and Restoration Project. In the absence of Indian interest in implementing it, Dhaka offered the project to China, a move that was not viewed favourably in India. Indeed, Hasina's last foreign trip to China reportedly faltered partly because of this issue. Recent rumours that the BNP government may offer the same project to China, alongside its active outreach to several external powers, stand in sharp contrast to the current Indo-Bangladeshi impasse. Following the BJP's victory in West Bengal, attempts to push out alleged Bangladeshi settlers from across the Indian border have added another layer of tension to bilateral ties.

Amid the numerous uncertainties in bilateral relations, the assumption of office by the new Indian High Commissioner in Dhaka may prove to be a silver lining in an otherwise overcast environment. While all indications suggest that the Ganges Water Treaty is likely to be renewed amicably, and even an interim agreement on the Teesta may be within reach, the larger and more consequential question remains: how does India envision its future engagement with Bangladesh? Bangladesh would be keen to turn a new page in the relationship, and India would do well not to overlook the importance of a neighbour whose cooperation can make a meaningful difference to the regional landscape.

(The writer is a professor at the Jindal School of International Affairs, O P Jindal Global University, Haryana)

WORLD AT A GLANCE



Singer Dua Lipa attends wedding festivities following her marriage to actor Callum Turner in Palermo, Italy, on Friday. REUTERS

Trump calls for US military to accelerate use of AI

► President Donald Trump has issued a memo calling on the US military and national security agencies to accelerate their use of artificial intelligence (AI), while acknowledging the need to protect civil liberties and maintain oversight of autonomous weapon systems, AP/PTI reports from Washington.

The memo comes at a time of growing concern over AI in American society, from its potential to replace jobs to its role in identifying targets on the battlefield. The Trump administration has been pushing to expand the use of AI within the US military, while some

military leaders and defence contractors have urged caution and called for safeguards. Trump's memo was addressed to much of his Cabinet, including the secretaries of defence and homeland security, as well as the attorney general and the director of national intelligence.

The president is requiring an updated directive on autonomous weapon systems to reflect AI's rapidly evolving capabilities. It directs the Department of Defense "to ensure the deliberate adoption of AI systems that respect the chain of command and operational authorities".

Ukrainian drones hit St Petersburg

► Residents of St Petersburg were told not to leave their homes after a large-scale Ukrainian drone attack targeted Russia's second-largest city on Saturday morning, underscoring Kyiv's growing ability to strike deep inside Russia, AP/PTI reports from St Petersburg.

The attack came a day after Russian President Vladimir Putin refused an offer to meet his Ukrainian

counterpart. St Petersburg Governor Alexander Beglov advised residents not to go outside and warned of possible disruptions to mobile internet services, while regional Governor Alexander Drozdenko said 141 drones were shot down over the surrounding Leningrad region. Russia's Defence Ministry said its air defences shot down 376 Ukrainian drones.



Spain's king Felipe VI welcomes Pope Leo XIV at the Royal Palace in Madrid on Saturday. Leo will meet migrants and organisations helping them during the visit. AFP

Israeli strikes kill 9 in Lebanon

► Israeli airstrikes on southern Lebanon on Saturday killed nine people, including three members of the Lebanese military, the Lebanese army and state media said, days after the two sides reached a new ceasefire agreement, AP/PTI reports from Beirut.

An airstrike on a vehicle on a road linking the city of Nabatiyeh with the town of Marjayoun killed a brigadier general, a captain and another soldier, the army said, without immediately releasing their names.

Another airstrike on the southern village of Saksakiyah killed six people. "The continued, deliberate and repeated Israeli aggression against Lebanon, its people and its army only strengthens our resolve, faith and determination," the army said in a statement.

Ebola cases could reach 20,000

► The Ebola outbreak in Central Africa could grow to 20,000 cases or more, depending on how quickly infected people are isolated to slow transmission, according to a new analysis by US health officials, AP/PTI reports from New York.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published a range

of scenarios generated by computer models, ranging from 10,000 cases to more than 20,000. If accurate, the worst-case scenario could approach the largest Ebola outbreak in history — the West Africa epidemic of 2014-2016, which resulted in more than 28,000 reported cases and over 11,000 deaths.

Hegseth urges Europe to tackle migrant 'invasion'

US defence chief urges Europe to strengthen defence commitments

LANGRUNE-SUR-MER (FRANCE), AFP



US Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth at the D-Day landings anniversary in Colleville-sur-Mer, France, on Saturday. AFP

US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth on Saturday urged Europe to counter what he termed an "invasion" of its coastline by migrants, as he marked the 82nd anniversary of the World War II D-Day landings in northern France.

Hegseth also called on European countries to do more to contribute to their defence in a speech at the American military cemetery in Colleville-sur-Mer, Normandy.

He was, however, conspicuously set to skip the main in-

ternational ceremony marking the anniversary of the landings, which helped bring about the end of World War II, later in the afternoon. "Sadly, today different European beaches are stormed by different dangerous ideologies," Hegseth said. On "beaches in Spain and Italy and Greece and Bulgaria, boats and men

arrive", he said. "When will European capitals do something about that invasion? Or is it too late?" His comments echoed the argument of the administration of US President Donald Trump that mass migration represents a danger to European civilisation.

US Vice President JD Vance on Friday blamed Britain's handling of the murder of a white student by a Sikh man on what he called civilisational decline caused by an "invasion" of migrants.

"May we learn from this past," Hegseth said, referring to the pivotal involvement of American troops in the Allied landings. "The men buried here fought in a war-fighting alliance where every partner... brought its full measure of industry, courage and sacrifice," he said in front of the 9,387 white crosses marking American soldiers killed in action during the Battle of Normandy.

Singapore blocks social media posts attacking Indian community

SINGAPORE, PTI: The Singapore government on Saturday ordered three social media platforms to block access to 14 posts, likely originating from China, that targeted the Indian community and sought to undermine the country's model of multiculturalism.

The police have issued disabling directions under the Online Criminal Harms Act (OCHA) to block access to the posts on YouTube, Facebook and X, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said in a statement.

About 75% of Singapore's population of more than six million is of Chinese descent, 15% is Malay, and 7%-9% is of Indian origin. The remainder comprises other ethnic groups and nationalities.

The direction requires the platforms to "take all reasonable steps to disable access by Singapore users to these posts", the ministry added.

Taiwan reports Chinese operation near Pratas

TAIPEI, REUTERS

Taiwan said on Saturday that a Chinese coast guard ship and a research vessel had carried out the first coordinated operation to "provoke" Taiwan in waters around strategically located islands in the South China Sea.

The Taiwan-controlled Pratas Islands, a national park toward the northern end of the South China Sea and lightly defended by the coast guard, have emerged as a new pressure point in China's ongoing military and quasi-military operations around Taiwan as Beijing seeks to assert its sovereignty claims.

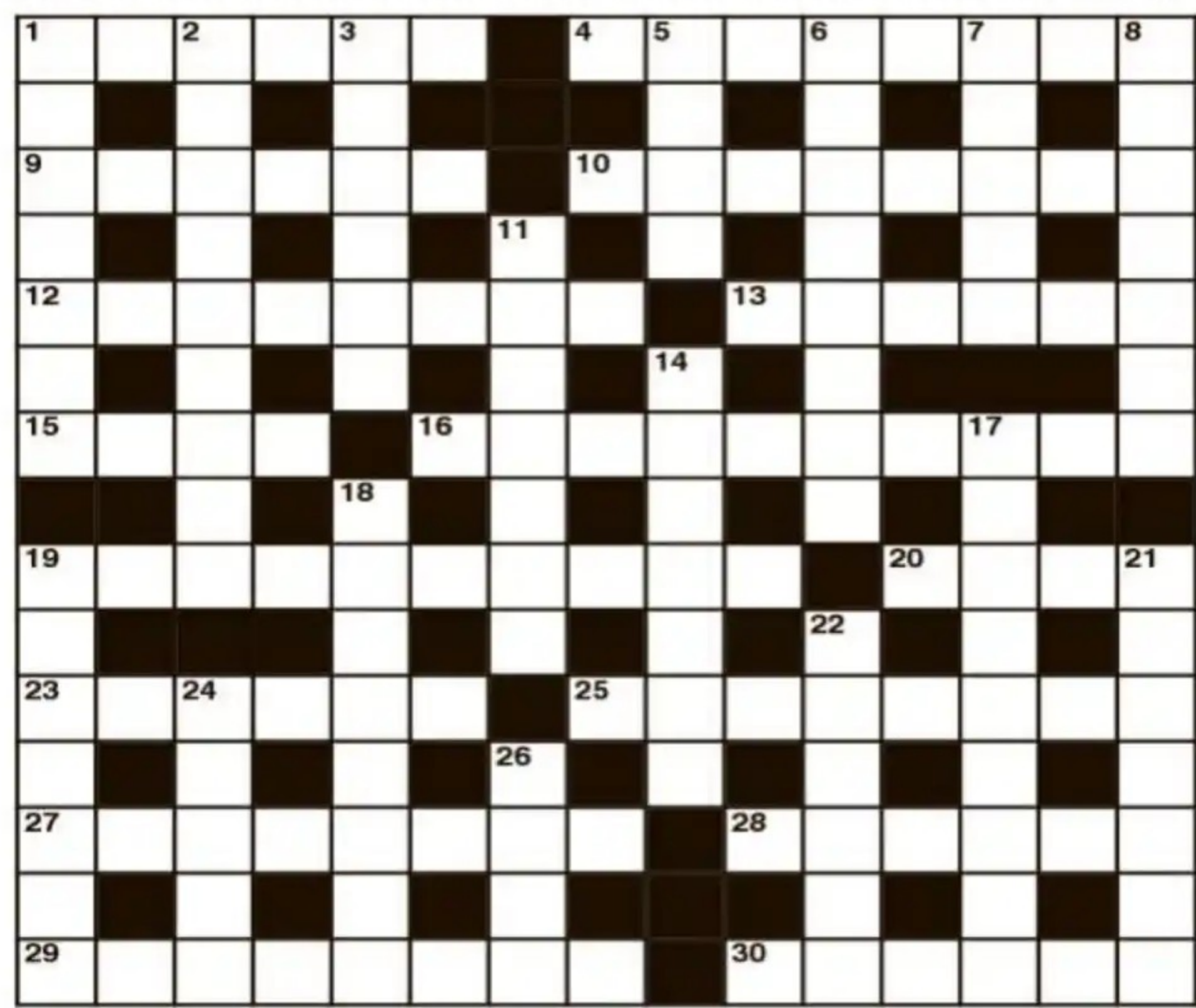
The islands, located between southern Taiwan and Hong Kong, are seen by some security experts as vulnerable to a Chinese attack because of their distance—more than 400 km (250 miles)—from the main island of Taiwan.

Taiwan's coast guard said in a statement that, along with a Chinese coast guard ship that had approached the Pratas Islands on Friday, a Chinese oceanographic survey vessel approached the islands on Saturday.

"This is the first observed instance of Chinese coast guard and survey vessels acting in coordination to provoke Taiwan," it said.

China's Taiwan Affairs Office did not immediately respond to a request for comment. China considers Taiwan and the Pratas Islands, an atoll with no civilian population, to be its territory. Taiwan's government rejects Beijing's claims, saying only the island's people can decide their future. "These acts are highly provocative. The PRC is a sick bully, causing trouble across the region," Taiwan National Security Council Secretary-General Joseph Wu wrote on his X account.

◆ SUNDAY CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 2683 ◆

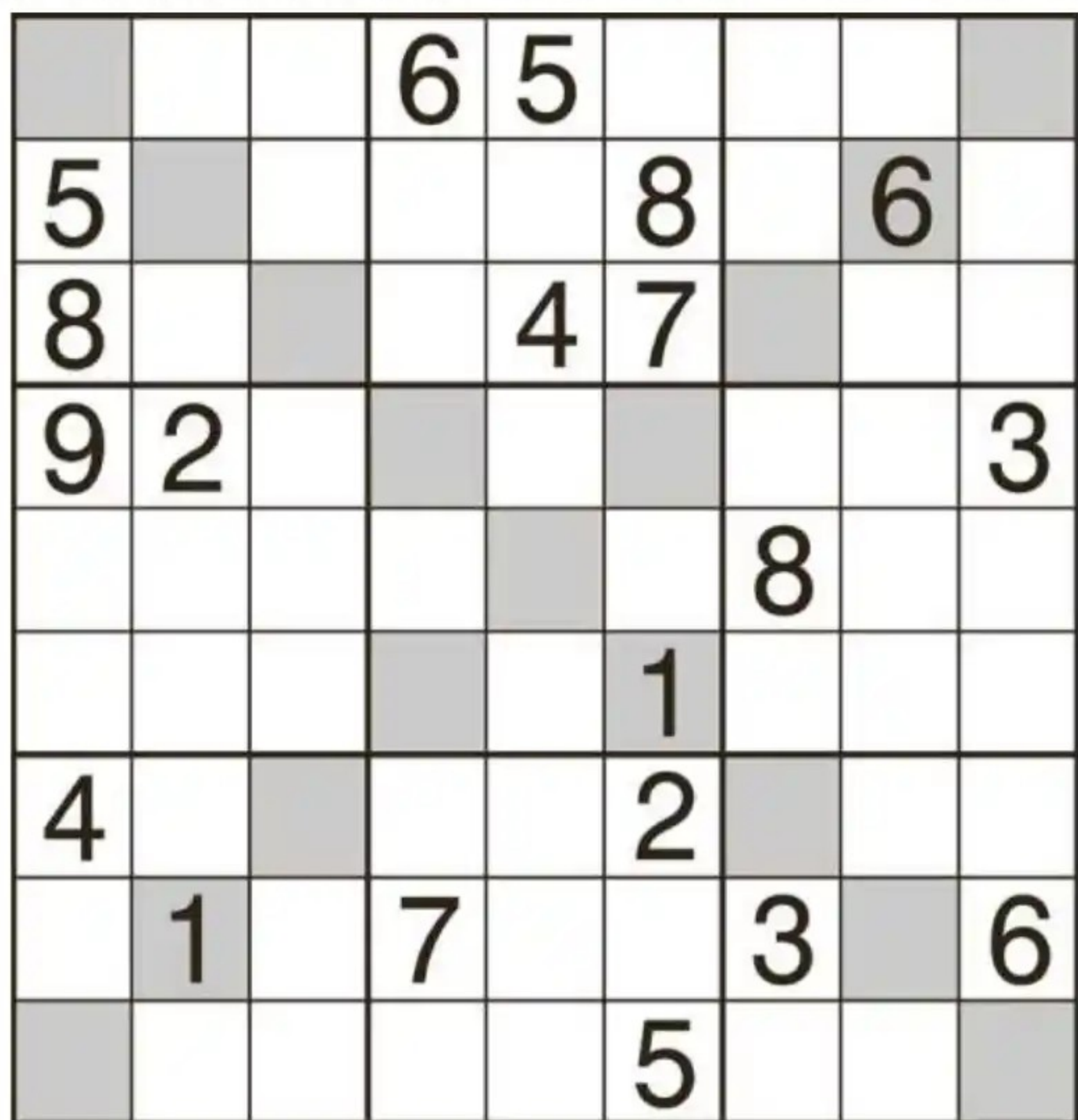


ACROSS
1 Of superior quality (6)
4 Something completely useless (4,4)
9 Long boring list (6)
10 In original condition (8)
12 Force of personality (8)
13 Artificial underground passage (6)
15 Iridescent gemstone (4)
16 Find after long search (3,2,5)
19 Occupation, profession (4,2,4)
20 Humiliating rebuff (4)
23 Expenditure (6)
25 An outlaw (8)
27 Unquestioning (8)
28 Adorn (6)
29 Small ingenious devices (8)

30 Horse's fastest pace (6)
DOWN
1 Caribbean music genre (7)
2 Without delay, as payment (2,3,4)
3 Large marine eel (6)
5 Deserve (4)
6 Uneasiness (8)
7 Bulbous vegetable (5)
8 Secrecy (7)
11 A moral doubt (7)
14 Suppressed (7)
17 Sound familiar (4,1,4)
18 Genuine (4,4)
19 West central US state (7)
21 End of a relationship (5-2)
22 Swiss city and lake (6)
24 Unenthusiastic (5)
26 Landing stage (4)

SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD 4043
CRYPTIC
ACROSS: 9, In advance 10, Only human 12, Lots 13, Settle 14, Tarnish 15, Dress down 17, One better 18, No-I-some 19, Re-tail 20, E-pi-C 23, Cleaned up 25, Calendars 26, Pays 27, Swa-the 29, S-tern-um 32, Right face 34, Cap-it-ally 35, Abr-East 36, Drag-on 37, Star 38, Cha-cha-cha 39, Retainers.
DOWN: 1, Filled in 2, Fast delivery 3, AntE-lope 4, Be-a-ten 5, Comes out 6, Flat denial 7, Char-(bet) ter 8, On the rocks 11, Mo-I-st 16, Spoons (rev) 19, Rap (rev) 21, Plain clot-he's 22, In-tent 23, Cap'er sauce 24, Dawn attack 25, Cue (queue) 28, T-he id-eal 29, Sup-ports 30, May-oress 31, Attach-E (case) 33, (do)G-erda 34, Cha-I-rs.

SU DO KU X - 3939



SOLUTION TO 3938
9 5 6 8 1 4 3 7 2
8 2 4 7 6 3 1 5 9
3 7 1 2 5 9 6 8 4
5 1 3 6 4 8 9 2 7
7 4 9 5 3 2 8 6 1
2 6 8 1 9 7 4 3 5
6 8 7 4 2 1 5 9 3
1 9 2 3 8 5 7 4 6
4 3 5 9 7 6 2 1 8
To solve the puzzle:
The objective is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column, each 3x3 box and each shaded diagonal line contains the same number only once.

TEST OF CHARACTER

On the back of an inspirational ODI World Cup triumph, Women in Blue eye elusive T20 prize

VIGNESH BHARADWAJ
BENGALURU, DHNS

William Shakespeare wrote that uneasy lies the head that wears a crown. In the cricketing world, it well and truly lies with India. They are bothered and humbled by the prospect of failure. It haunts them, hurts them, but also nourishes them. Powerhouses Australia can afford to slip, preachers England can fumble, while talented New Zealand can fall short, but India must win. And not much can protect the players from that very truth.

After a 47-year-long wait, India finally lifted their first-ever Women's ODI World Cup in 2025, mirroring the watershed moment of 1983 for men. And it could not have come at a better place than home.

A victory in a country that is cricket-mad, one with a population of over 1.4 billion, was epoch-defining. But, no matter how one defines success or finds a way to manage expectations, the sport does not allow anyone to rest on their glory days.

For India, each tournament is a trophy waiting to happen. And Harmanpreet Kaur's girls know it too, especially with their squad stacked with some of the finest talents in the world.

Coming into the tenth edition of the T20 World Cup as one of the contenders, India will be wary of the job ahead. This time, though, they will be in uncharted territory, carrying the weight of expectations on their shoulders.

"Battling expectations is going to be something that will pose a bit of a challenge because they have created history, and they are looking strong as a unit. This is a different kind of expectation that they are not used to. It will be a challenge for sure, but what is the World Cup without challenges?" former India women's head coach WV Raman tells DHoS.

While the past ICC events have not been very kind, this is a different Indian side. They look solid and are a team oozing confidence. And it says much for their progress over the last decade that nobody would be surprised if they go on to lift their second World Cup within a span of nine months. For that, though, they will have to first survive the Group of Death alongside

Weight of expectations on INDIA'S SHOULDERS

Australia, South Africa, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Netherlands.

"India will be one of the teams looked upon as contenders to win the tournament. That carries weight. Adding to the advantage is that these girls have been playing T20 leagues across the world, which has meant they have gotten used to how this format is played, and they have also done well. This should go down as one of the most settled sides while a few are transitioning," explains Raman.

However, India have only managed to reach one final in nine T20 World Cups. And that reinforces just how monumental the task is to be the last team

standing. While the fans have been instilled with a sense of belief, history and momentum, are not on India's side. In the 2024 edition in the UAE, they failed to get out of the group stage.

The preparations for the forthcoming T20 showpiece started on a

brilliant note, with a 5-0 clean sweep of Sri Lanka and a historic 2-1 win over Australia. The momentum took a back seat during the South Africa tour and the England series, exposing issues in tough conditions.

In those eight T20Is, the batting showcased inconsistency, the middle-order failed to press the accelerator, and the bowling attack lacked bite in crucial moments. However, Raman, who coached India to their only T20 World Cup final in 2020, does not read too much into the recent results.

"The general tendency of focusing on the losses is prevailing even now. They have probably tried a few experiments to see what their final XI can be for the tournament. When you are trying to do different things to arrive at a solution, there could be losses along the way. I don't think I'll read much into it," highlights Raman.

There are some genuine concerns though. And it is India's fielding. While the batting talent can be world beaters and the bowling de-

able, the fielding has been below par. And it has come in all varieties. Drops, missed chances behind the stumps, lack of communication, and the sharpness on the field.

Raman certainly feels India will need to pull up their socks.

"Modern-day cricket is all about fitness and fielding, if not anything else. They will need to measure up. How they do it is something totally up to them because these are things that are worked out individually. I think it's all a case of the individuals being focused. That's what it will boil down to. Why there are lapses on the field is something that we can't really fathom. However, if a side is not fielding well, then I think they have to be blamed."

Another is India's shifting strategies. Yastika Bhatia was slotted in at No. 3 after her return, which resulted in Jemimah Rodrigues, who excelled as one drop, moving to four and five. That in turn, pushed Harmanpreet to drop from the No. 4 slot to No. 5 in one of the games. While these could be experiments, Smriti Mandhana and Richa Ghosh have failed to find rhythm. On the bowling front, India have rotated their resources with Kranti Goud, Arundhati Reddy, and Nandini Sharma all getting a look in.

However, Harmanpreet insisted that the team management was pretty clear about their preferred XI and these were the final fine-tuning before they kick off their campaign against arch-rivals Pakistan on June 14 in Birmingham.

"Smriti and Harmanpreet will need to really be on top of their game. Smriti has had a great period of 18 months until the end of last year. If the captain and vice-captain are going to be at the top of their game, then others will play with a lot of freedom. As far as batting is concerned, this is perhaps one of the most explosive and efficient batting sides that we have on paper. If they don't deliver as much as one would expect them to, then it should come as a surprise," adds Raman.

The expectations, already so high, are only going to grow bigger as the tournament nears and progresses. India, on the back of a historic World Cup, will look to turn the unfamiliar pressure into a privilege as they go for a slice of history in the same country that crushed them to bits nine years ago.



Harmanpreet Kaur's India broke a 47-year jinx to be crowned ICC ODI World Cup champions in November 2025. PTI FILE PHOTO

Xanthe wins main event

BENGALURU RESULTS

SS Attallaah-trained Xanthe, ridden by Hindu Singh, won the Nawab M Arshad Ali Khan Memorial Cup, the main event of the races here on Saturday.

1. The Asrot Plate -- 1400M: Avenger (Geoffrey B Nagpal and Charonne Nagpal) A Sandesh 1, Exotic Black (Alex Rozario) 2, Burevestnik (Vivek G) 3, Shining Path (Antony Raj). WB: 6 1/2, 1/2, 1. T:1-27.32. Tote: Rs 16 (w) 13, 20p; Shp: Rs 29; Thp: Rs 36; Fc: Rs 37; Q: Rs 38; Tri: Rs 61 & 21; Exp: Rs 114 & 78. TB: A Jotha. Fav: Avenger.

2. The Rare Gem Plate (Div II) -- 1200M: Hushed (Dinesh Kumar) 1, Ashhad Asbar 1, Zayana 2, Lightning Blitz (Suraj Narredu) 3, Vibrant Queen (Sai Kiran) 4. WB: 4, 3/4, Snk. T: 1:16.38. Tote: Rs 29 (w) 12, 16, 11p; Shp: Rs 45; Thp: Rs 40; Fc: Rs 385; Q: Rs 200; Tri: Rs 672 & 127; Exp: Rs 800 & 391. TB: V Lokanath. Fav: Lightning Blitz.

3. The Santorini Star Plate -- 1400M: Versace (Udaya Shankar) Laxman Singh 1, Legendary Impact (Aditya Waydande) 2, Stella Maris (Pavan) 3, Golden Gallery (Vishal) 4. WB: 7 3/4, Nose, Lnk. T: 1:29.13. Tote: Rs 46(w) 16, 25, 12p; Shp: Rs 65; Thp: Rs 50; Fc: Rs 346; Q: Rs 184; Tri: Rs 459 & 175; Exp: Rs 4456 & 3183. TB: M R Singh. Fav: Stella Maris.

4. The Bright R C R Hill Memorial Trophy -- 1800M: Caccini (Poonawalla Racing Breeding Pvt Ltd, Zavaray, Behroze, Yohan, Michelle, Delna, Simone, Tania and Rishad N Pandole) Vivek G 1, Moon Star (Suraj Narredu) 2, Winfield (Antony Raj) 3, Maana (A Sandesh) 4. WB: 1 3/4, 2 1/4, 3/4, T:1:52.80. Tote: Rs 49 (w) 15, 15, 11p; Shp: Rs 45; Thp: Rs 31; Fc: Rs 271; Q: Rs 148; Tri: Rs 808 & 322; Exp: Rs 1404 & 455. TB: Karthik Ganathay. Fav: Maana.

5. The Nawab M Arshad Ali Khan Memorial Cup -- 1400M: Xanthe (C Aryama Sunderam) Hindu Singh 1, Kalamitsi (A Sandesh) 2, Mandarino (Pavan) 3, Star Glory (Saurav Rawal) 4. WB: 1 1/2, 1 1/2, 1 1/4, T: 1:26.72. Tote: Rs 51 (w) 15, 15 p; Shp: Rs 24; Thp: Rs 27; Fc: Rs 187; Q: Rs 78 ; Tri: Rs 943 & 491; Exp: Rs 2797 & 1291. TB: S Attallaah. Fav: Global Influence.

6. The Rare Gem Plate (Div II) -- 1200M: Sapporo (Rapar's Galloping Star Llp) Pavan 1, Carat Love (Mukesh Kumar) 2, Solara (A Sandesh) 3, Blind Faith (Neeraj Rawal) 4. WB: 1 3/4, 2 1/4, 1. T: 1:14.81. Tote: Rs 44 (w) 12, 27, 11 p; Shp: Rs 84; Thp: Rs 50; Fc: Rs 850; Q: Rs 542; Tri: Rs 2336 & 365; Exp: Rs 3578 & 2359. TB: I Chatala. Fav: Solara.

Jackpot: Rs 47,588 & 2124. **Mini jackpot:** Rs 10,123. **Treble:** Rs 504. **Il treble:** Rs 1072.

Zuccaro for feature

BENGALURU SELECTIONS

Pesi Shroff-trained Zuccaro, to be ridden by Vivek G, will be the favourite to win the H H Krishnaraja Wadiyar Cup, the feature event of the races here on Sunday. The first race starts at 2.30 pm.

1. The Mystic Memory Plate -- 1400M: Eagle Eye 1, Sicyon 2, Flight of Fancy 3.

2. The Nandi Plate -- 1400M: Southern Force 1, Dynamic Force 2, Star Comet 3.

3. The CNN Family and Friends Legacy Trophy -- 1200M: Legacy Field 1, Regal Beauty 2, Heimlich 3.

4. The Speakers Cup -- 1200M: Rieko 1, Jersey King 2, Don Carlos 3.

5. The H H Krishnaraja Wadiyar Cup -- 1600M: Zuccaro 1, Mayne Magic 2, Redefined 3.

6. The Astounding Plate -- 1600M: Pledge 1, Quendum 2, Amazing Stride 3.

Day's best: Pledge. **Jackpot:** 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6. **Mini jackpot:** 3, 4, 5 & 6. **Treble:** 1, 2 & 3. **Il treble:** 4, 5 & 6.

Andreeva coronated

Russian becomes youngest Roland Garros champ since Seles in 1992

PARIS, AFP

Mirra Andreeva won her first Grand Slam title on Saturday by downing Polish qualifier Maja Chwalinska in straight sets in the French Open final.

The 19-year-old Russian beat Chwalinska 6-3, 6-2 to become the youngest Roland Garros women's singles champion since Monica Seles, then aged 18, won her third straight title in Paris in 1992.

With her first-ever major crown, Andreeva also became the first player, man or woman, born after 2005 to win a Grand Slam. The Coupe Suzanne Lenglen will now take centre spot in Andreeva's burgeoning trophy cabinet, which already features two WTA 1000 titles.

Defeat at the final hurdle brought to an end an astonishing run which started in qualifying for Chwalinska, who won nine matches in the French capital to become the first qualifier to reach the final in the Open era.

However, the world No. 114's career will now be on a different stratosphere as she will climb to 21 in the rankings and be assured of competing



Russia's Mirra Andreeva celebrates with the trophy and her pet dog after beating Poland's Maja Chwalinska in the final of the French Open in Paris on Saturday. REUTERS

regularly in tennis' biggest tournaments.

Chwalinska displayed some early nerves as she dumped two serves straight into the net on the very first point of the match, with Andreeva finally forcing a break at the end of a seven-minute long opening game.

But the Pole broke back instantly as Andreeva overcooked a backhand down the

line following a series of looping defensive shots coming from both sides of the court at 30-40.

Both players seemed to be struggling with the occasion, a situation not helped by blustery conditions on centre court, as two more consecutive breaks came about.

Chwalinska then put an end to that as she held to love,

bringing the crowd to their feet as she showed the variety of her shot selection by drawing Andreeva to the net with a drop shot before lobbing her with a perfectly weighted volley en route to taking a 3-2 lead.

But Andreeva waited patiently to strike with a winner up the line before slamming down an ace to earn her first hold of the match.

Results: Women (final, prefix denotes seeding) 8-Mirra Andreeva (RUS) bt Maja Chwalinska (Pol) 6-3, 6-2

A battle for a breakthrough

PARIS, AFP

LIVE 6:30 PM

Alexander Zverev is hoping it will be fourth time lucky as he again targets a first Grand Slam title in Sunday's French Open final, facing Italian 10th seed Flavio Cobolli.

The 29-year-old German was widely tipped as a future multiple major champion and the leader of the 'NextGen' to challenge the 'Big Three' of Novak Djokovic, Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer almost 10 years ago.

He missed his chances in that era, then watched as Janik Sinner and Carlos Alcaraz emerged to mop up 11 Slam titles between them.

But Zverev has a golden opportunity at Roland Garros to finally end his wait to triumph at tennis' top table, after making serene progress in Paris with an injured Alcaraz sidelined as Sinner and Djokovic suffered surprise early exits from the tournament.

Cobolli called the wide-

open men's draw the "chance of my life" earlier this week, but Zverev has been cautious in avoiding saying something similar, preferring to insist he is focusing on one match at a time.

"The only thing I can control is that I play good tennis," said Zverev.

"I mean, I will try to show my level. I will try to do the right things. Yeah, that's the only thing that matters to me."

Zverev's first Slam final ended in heartbreak as he blew a two-set lead at the 2020 US Open to lose to Dominic Thiem.

He had to wait four years for another opportunity, but lost from two-sets-to-one up against Alcaraz at Roland Garros, and was then seen off in straight sets by Sinner in last year's Australian Open final. The pair are friends off the court, while Zverev holds a 3-1 winning record.



Italy's Flavio Cobolli (left) takes on Alexander Zverev of Germany in the French Open final on Sunday. AFP



Misaka UFC defeat Maharaja SFC

BENGALURU, DHNS: Mangalathuam (2nd), Obed Thangoulen (41st) and Vungialien (32nd) scored one goal each in Misaka United FC's 3-1 win over Maharaja Socials FC during their Group 1 game of the BDFA C Division League matches here on Saturday.

LOCAL FOOTBALL

In another game in Group 4, Suresh V netted a brace (15th, 22nd) following his team-mate Infant Raj A's 2nd-minute goal to help Konkan FC score a 3-1 win over Vel Socials FC.

In Group 8, Benish Xavier and Shaun Sebastian netted a brace each to help Rangers FC post a convincing 4-0 victory over Bangalore Blues FC.

Results: C Division: Group 1: Misaka United FC: 3 (Mangalathuam 2nd, Obed Thangoulen 41st, Vungialien 32nd) bt Maharaja Socials FC: 1 (Evans Thomas Pulinat 60+1st); Bangalore Wanderers FC: 1 (Shevin Girinath 60th) drew with Gowthama FC: 1 (Sunil Kumar 2nd).

Group 2: Town SC Hoskote FC walkover from Bangalore Muslims FC; Bangalore Reds FC: 1 (Kishore A 47th) drew with J Sports FC: 1 (Sothing Chithung 47th).

Group 4: Konkan FC: 3 (Infant Raj A 2nd, Suresh V 15th, 22nd) bt Vel Socials FC: 1 (Watson Abraham V 57th).

Group 8: Royals FC: 1 (Dipin BM 41st) drew with RBI FC: 1 (Praveen Kumar 42nd); Rangers FC: 4 (Benish Xavier 21st, 28th, Shawn Sebastian 62nd, 73rd) bt Bangalore Blues FC: 0.



Nettakkallappa Aquatic Centre's men's team celebrate after winning the NRJ State Senior Aquatic Waterpolo Championship at the BCU Base Camp on Saturday.

NAC men, BAC women lift titles

BENGALURU, DHNS

Nettakkallappa Aquatic Centre (NAC) were crowned champions in the men's section of the NRJ State Senior Aquatic Waterpolo Championship after securing an 18-9 win over Swimlife in the final at the BCU Base Camp here on Saturday.

In the bronze medal contest, Basavanagudi Aquatic Centre (BAC) overcame Star

Aquatics 14-9 in the two-day event.

It was delight for BAC women as they defeated NAC 24-12 to clinch the gold medal. In the third-place face off, Star Aquatics scored a 17-7 win over Association of Integrated Mysore Swimmers to stand on the podium.

NAC's Harshith B and Prachetha R Rao won the best player awards in the men's and women's sections respectively.

Results: Men (final): NAC: 18 bt SwimLife: 9.

Bronze medal: BAC: 14 bt Star Aquatics: 9.

Women (final): BAC: 24 bt NAC: 12.

Bronze medal: Star Aquatics: 17 bt Association of Integrated Mysore Swimmers: 7.

Special Awards: Best Goalkeeper:

Men: Vishruth Chakravathy (SwimLife).

Women: Pravda Malatesh (NAC).

Best player: Men: Harshith B (NAC).

Women: Prachetha R Rao (NAC).

Golden hue for Indian colts

KAKAMIGAHARA, PTI: Ashish Purti struck a fine hat-trick as a dominant India defeated hosts Japan 4-1 in the final to lift the men's Under-18 Asia Cup title here on Friday.

Purti scored in the 2nd, 28th and 34th minutes while captain Ketan Kushwaha (30th) also found the back of the net for India as they produced a commanding display against the home team.

Numada Gaku scored Ja-

pan's lone goal of the contest in the 52nd minute.

Women finish third

Sandeepa Kumari (2nd), captain Sweety Kujur (16th) and Nousheen Naz (33rd) were on target as India capped off their campaign with a third-place podium finish by beating Korea 3-0 in the women's section.

For her influential performance and opening goal, Sandeepa Kumari was adjudged the Player of the Match.



R Praggnanandhaa

Praggu triumphs in Norway to make history

OSLO, PTI: Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa etched his name in the history books as he became the first Indian to win the prestigious Norway Chess title with a final-round victory over Germany's Vincent Keymer here, capping off a brilliant campaign in style.

Praggnanandhaa, who began the final round in second place with 15 points on Friday, delivered when it mattered the most, securing a classical win worth three full points to finish on 18 points and clinch one of the most coveted trophies in elite chess.

In doing so, the 20-year-old Chennai player achieved a feat that had eluded even Indian chess legend Viswanathan Anand and reigning world champion D Gukesh, among others, since the tournament's inception in 2013.

Competing in Norway Chess for only the second time, Praggnanandhaa endured a slow start in the elite six-player field before gathering momentum in the second half of the event to secure four wins on the trot.

His campaign was highlighted by a remarkable achievement – defeating seven-time Norway Chess champion and World No. 1 Magnus Carlsen twice in classical chess – a rare accomplishment that underlined his determination to bounce back from the disappointment of an underwhelming Candidates Tournament in Paphos earlier this year.

As reigning world champion Gukesh fell out of contention in the closing stages, Praggnanandhaa ensured that India's challenge remained alive, ultimately carrying it all the way to the title. The result was made possible after American Grandmaster Wesley So was held to a draw by Alireza Firouzja.

Shaili, women's 4x100m quartet win gold

TAIPEI CITY, PTI: Long jumper Shaili Singh and the women's 4x100m relay team won a gold medal each while Tejas Shirshe bagged a silver in the 110m hurdles, as all the Indian athletes in the fray returned with a medal on the opening day of the New Taipei City Athletics Open here on Saturday.

Shaili was not at her best as she jumped 6.24m, but that was enough for her to take the top spot. She could not go nowhere near her season's best of 6.58m, which she had recorded while winning silver at the Federation Cup last month. Her personal best remains 6.76m, set in 2023.

The Indian women's 4x100m relay quartet of SS Sneha, Srabani Nanda, Sudeshna Shivankar and Tamannaran 44.07 seconds to win the gold and equal the meet record.

The national record holder Shirshe clocked 13.58 seconds in the men's 110m hurdles final. Chinese Taipei's 20-year-old Hsieh Yuan-kai claimed the gold with a time of 13.57 seconds.

The last day of the meet is on Sunday.

◆ ON TV ◆

CRICKET

One-off Test: India vs Afghanistan (day 2, 9:30 am). **LIVE** on **Star Sports 2, JioHotstar**.

FIRST TEST: England vs New Zealand (day 4, 3:30 pm). **LIVE** on **Sony Sports Network**.

TENNIS

French Open: Men's singles (final, 6:30 pm). **LIVE** on **Sony Sports Network**.

BADMINTON

Indonesia Open: Final (12:30 pm). **LIVE** on **Star Sports Select 2, JioHotstar**.

Rahul, Gill slam centuries as dominant hosts post 368/3

MADHU JAWALI
MULLANPUR, DHNS

A genuine edge wasn't reviewed and a difficult chance was grassed. Between these two incidents lay Afghanistan's ordeal as India batted themselves into a position of supreme strength on the opening day of the one-off Test.

KL Rahul was on 16 when he nicked pacer Zia Ur Rahman behind the wickets. There was a clear sound but the wicket-keeper wasn't convinced and the bowler didn't persist. The TV replay showed a clear spike on the snicko but the chance had gone abegging and the stylish right-hander went on to compile his 12th Test ton (100, 165b, 11x4) that was marked by early tentativeness and silken drives as he got his eyes in.

Sai Sudharsan looked busy from the onset and was chugging along smoothly when he feathered Nangyal Kharoti in the very first over the left-arm spinner bowled. The ball came off the wicketkeeper's pads to slip where Rahmanullah Gurbaz was too slow to react. The left-hander brought up an attractive 81 (104b, 13x4).

The 139-run stand for the second wicket between the young apprentice and seasoned campaigner set the tone

for India's massive 368/3 in 85 overs on an extended day here at the Maharaja Yadavindra Singh stadium on Saturday.

Notwithstanding his fourth hundred in 10 last Tests, Rahul would be slightly miffed with himself for once again failing to convert his knock into a big hundred. Remarkably, this is the third instance in a row when the Karnataka batter has fallen immediately after posting an exact 100.

Skipper Shubman Gill, returning to Test cricket after missing India's last match against South Africa in Guwahati due to a neck injury, made a smooth transition to red-ball cricket after a lengthy IPL with his 11th Test ton (103 n.o., 143b, 11x4, 1x6) in his 41st appearance.

His former deputy Rishabh Pant, who was goaded by head coach Gautam Gambhir to play the situation without curbing his natural game on Friday, too helped himself to a characteristic unbeaten 50 (70b, 2x4, 3x6) where his watchful approach was interspersed with audacious stroke-play in front of a motley crowd.

Opting to bat first on a surface that showed signs of turn and variable bounce on day 1 itself, India made most of the best batting conditions availa-



India's KL Rahul (left) and Shubman Gill celebrate after scoring centuries on the opening day of the one-off Test against Afghanistan in Mullanpur on Saturday. PTI

ble while Afghanistan, whose lack of experience in the format was evident, failed to grab their chances, while their defensive mindset even when the ball was turning turned out to be their undoing. It didn't help their cause that left-arm spinner Sharafuddin Ashraf walked off the field after injuring himself while attempting a diving stop in the slip.

Not that if Afghanistan had grabbed those chances, the situation would have been dramatically different, but their largesse certainly allowed Indian batters to play with the freedom they did. While Rahul and Sudharsan picked bowlers of their choice to score runs off, the duo ensured that none of the visiting spinners settled into any sort of rhythm, dis-

Beyond boundaries

The Maharaja Yadavindra Singh International Cricket Stadium in New Chandigarh became the 31st venue in India to host a Test match. It became the 4th venue in Punjab to host Test cricket.



● The 23-year old left-arm spin-bowling all-rounder **Manav Suthar** becomes the 319th player to represent India in Test matches.

● **KL Rahul's** last 3 Test centuries have all ended with his score exactly at 100.

● **Rishabh Pant** competed in his 50th Test, becoming only the 3rd designated wicket-keeper to play 50 Tests for India after MS Dhoni (90 Tests) and Syed Kirmani (88 Tests).

COMPILED BY ARUN GOPALAKRISHNAN

turbing their lines and lengths with their proactive batting.

Home-town hero Gill and Pant further dented Afghanistan's prospects in the match with a partnership that was an alliance between the

right-hander's fluid grace and left-hander's belligerence. Together they raised 121 runs for the unbroken fourth wicket, promising to inflict more damage when they resume on Sunday.

India, who went with a three-pronged spin attack after handing a debut to left-arm spinner Manav Suthar while slotting in Kuldeep Yadav and Washington Sundar, would be looking to bat the visitors out of the game.

Tactical changes brings Sai success

'When coach, captain back you, it gives you a lot of freedom and clarity'

MADHU JAWALI
MULLANPUR, DHNS

Sai Sudharsan had fallen to the leg-side trap set on his debut Test series in England last year. While it's not a novelty in international cricket, it's still quite unconventional that can unsettle a batter if he is not used to it. The batters are taught to leave the ball alone in the corridor of uncertainty, but it's very difficult to curb one's instinct to flick when you see a ball going down the leg, especially in the age of T20 cricket.

It can be productive, but a faint tickle can end your stint. Which is exactly what happened to Yashasvi Jaiswal on the day while Sudharsan, smarter by the experience, negated the threat to score an attractive 81 on the opening day of the one-off Test against Afghanistan here on Saturday.

"When it first happened in



India's Sai Sudharsan scored a measured 81 off 104 balls against Afghanistan on the opening day of the one-off Test in Mullanpur on Saturday. AFP

England, it was new to me," conceded Sudharsan in his post-day comments. "After that, I worked on it and developed a better understanding of how to handle it, which helped today. I wasn't focused on the field setup. I was watching the ball and trying to play it as well as possible."

The southpaw said the change was more a tactical adjustment than any technique in his game, and he worked on it after returning from England in his home town.

"In Chennai, I practiced in a place called CB (Coaching Beyond). That's where I always practiced and there I worked on it. From what I understood, I played a lot of balls and saw what I can do, what options I can take. That was more tactical rather than something technical."

On Friday, head coach Gautam Gambhir promised to give Sudharsan a long rope, a statement that immensely boosted the batter's confidence.

"It gives you a lot of freedom

and clarity," he offered. "When the coach, captain and team back you and want you to do well for the country, it's a great honour. It allows you to express yourself and play your natural game without worrying about runs or selection. That confidence comes from the support you receive from the team. It's a pleasure."

Sudharsan shared a tone-setting 139-run stand with K L Rahul (100) and the younger partner, who at times dominated the partnership, pointed out that the vice-captain's advice helps you gain composure.

"The conversation was more about understanding what was happening, understanding how the wicket was behaving and who was bowling what," Sudharsan said when asked about their approach during the alliance. "We were not thinking about taking a bigger role and playing second fiddle. It was more about how were the conditions and with KL, he gives so much composure. When I bat with him, he gives so much composure and he gives so much certainty. He sees the game very well and gives a lot of useful cues which we would use in the game."

Jaiswal replaces Kohli for Afghanistan ODIs

MUMBAI, PTI

Star batter Virat Kohli will miss India's three-match ODI series against Afghanistan later this month after failing to recover from a hamstring injury, and the selectors on Saturday named Yashasvi Jaiswal as his replacement.

The three ODIs will be played at Dharamsala, Lucknow and Chennai on June 13, 17 and 20 respectively.

Kohli, who plays only one format after retiring from Test and T20, had suffered a hamstring injury during the recent IPL final between Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Gujarat Titans in Ahmedabad.

Kohli had made an unbeaten 75 to fire RCB to their second IPL title in a row.

"With Virat, at this point, it's just been less than a week since he injured himself in the finals. We will assess him (but) we don't know the timelines yet," chief selector Ajit Agarkar told reporters during a press conference at the BCCI headquarters.

"Yashasvi will be his replacement. But it looks like



Yashasvi Jaiswal

he (Kohli) might be fit for that England one-day series (in July) but again, it's not a definitive answer.

"So, don't hold me to it. I haven't had a clear timeline from the physio yet," Agarkar added.

Meanwhile, BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia said former skipper Rohit Sharma will be heading to the Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru where all-rounder Hardik Pandya is nearing completion of his rehabilitation. **India squad:** Shubman Gill (capt), Rohit Sharma, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Shreyas Iyer (vice-capt), KL Rahul (wk), Ishan Kishan (wk), Hardik Pandya, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Washington Sundar, Kuldeep Yadav, Arshdeep Singh, Prasidh Krishna, Prince Yadav, Gurnoor Brar, Harsh Dubey.

Robinson rocks NZ but rain frustrates England

LONDON, AFP: Ollie Robinson (in pic) continued to prove a thorn in New Zealand's side, taking two quick wickets, as England moved closer to victory in the first Test during what little play was possible at Lord's on Saturday.

Rain and bad light meant fewer than 10 overs were bowled on the third day of this three-match series.

But that was enough time for the 32-year-old Robinson to take two wickets for no runs in four balls as New Zealand slumped to 53-5 in their second innings. The Black Caps added two more runs before rain, which meant there was no play before lunch, returned at 1310 GMT Saturday. The umpires finally abandoned proceedings for the

day at 1629 GMT, with a handful of spectators still braving the bad weather as the floodlights pierced the gloom in northwest London.

At 55-5, New Zealand need 199 more runs to reach a victory target of 254 in what is the 150th Test staged at Lord's – the most at any ground.

On only five occasions has the Black Caps successfully chased a higher total to win a Test. Only four sides have made more in the fourth innings to win a Test at Lord's. **Brief scores:** England: 140 all out & 226 all out in 56 overs (Ben Duckett 33, Emilio Gay 57, Jamie Smith 39, Ollie Robinson 39; Nathan Smith 6-70, Will O'Rourke 2-46) vs New Zealand: 113 all out & (O/N: 36/3) 55/5 in 21.3 overs (Gus Atkinson 2-16, Ollie Robinson 2-18).



Bumrah, Hardik for longer formats: Agarkar

MUMBAI, PTI

The national selection panel on Saturday did not include premier pacer Jasprit Bumrah and all-rounder Hardik Pandya in the squads to tour Ireland and England in a strong indication that the wise men are largely reserving their services for Tests and ODIs respectively in the coming season.

Bumrah and Pandya were a shadow of themselves in the recent IPL 2026 for Mumbai Indians after being on the field since late last year playing several T20 games, including a triumphant campaign in the World Cup, warranting a careful handling of the duo.

Bumrah will return to action during the Asian Games to be held from September 17 to October 3, but chief selector Ajit Agarkar made it clear that



Ajit Agarkar

the pacer will be used more in longer formats.

"Yeah, and also one-day World Cup, like T20 (format) was in the last World Cup...we know how important he is," Agarkar replied when he was asked if Bumrah was being preserved for Test assignments.

"The WTC cycle...we've still got a chance to (qualify for the final) if we play well enough

INDIA SQUADS
■ Ireland and England T201 series: Shreyas Iyer (capt), Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson, Ishan Kishan, Shivam Dube, Tilak Varma (vice-capt), Nitish Kumar Reddy, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Varun Chakravarthy, Ravi Bishnoi, Mohammad Siraj, Harshit Rana, Arshdeep Singh,

Prince Yadav and Vaibhav Sooryavanshi.

■ Asian Games in Japan: Shreyas Iyer (capt), Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson, Ishan Kishan, Shivam Dube, Tilak Varma (vice-capt), Nitish Kumar Reddy, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Varun Chakravarthy, Ravi Bishnoi, Harshit Rana, Arshdeep Singh,

over these next nine Tests, if we can have Jasprit play majority of those games and still keep him fit and healthy, it's always a (great) thing," he added.

India are set to tour Sri Lanka and New Zealand for two Tests each before taking on Australia in a five-match series at home, which would determine their qualification for the final of the 2025-2027 World

Test Championship cycle. "...there's a lot of T20 cricket, you can always bring him back. (In the) Asian Games, he will be there. The main aim is to try and keep him fit for the Test and the one-dayers," Agarkar said.

Unlike Bumrah, Pandya's chances of returning to the T20 establishment looks slimmer.

"He is a part of the one-day squad right now in (the) Af-



Kimi Antonelli. AFP

Antonelli takes pole position for Monaco F1 GP

MONTE CARLO, AFP: World championship leading teenager Kimi Antonelli continued his remarkable run of successes on Saturday by claiming pole position for Mercedes ahead of four-time champion Max Verstappen of Red Bull for Sunday's Monaco Grand Prix.

The 19-year-old Italian clocked one minute and 12.051 seconds to beat the Dutchman by 0.043 seconds in the final minute of a thrilling qualifying session that left both Ferraris on the second row of the grid.

After four wins, Antonelli will be seeking to become the first Italian to win five consecutive races since Alberto Ascari achieved the feat for Ferrari in 1952 after extending Mercedes' run to six successive poles this year.

Antonelli said he had produced "a magic lap". "It was so close with Max!" he said after securing his fourth pole of the season.

Seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton was third ahead of Charles Leclerc, Isack Hadjar in the second Red Bull and Mercedes' George Russell, who is 43 points behind Antonelli in the drivers' title race.

McLaren's Oscar Piastri outpaced team-mate and world champion Lando Norris to qualifying seventh.

Antonelli's pole was the first by a Mercedes driver since Hamilton in 2019 and he became the first Italian to take pole in Monaco since Jarno Trulli in 2004.

Shashank, Abhishek star for Young Orion

BENGALURU, DHNS: In a thrilling encounter, Young Orion's SC pipped Bharath SU 86-82 to advance to the semifinal of the Devanga Union Centenary Celebration of Prof NC Parappa State-level floodlit invitational basketball tournament for Men here on Saturday.



While Shashank Rai (25 points) and Abhishek Gowda (21) were the top-scorers for Young Orion's, Abhishek YP's 33-point effort went in vain for Bharath SU. **Results (quarterfinal):** Young Orion's SC: 86 (Shashank Rai 25, Abhishek Gowda 21) bt Bharath SU: 82 (Abhishek YP 33, Akashy 21, Kanishka 15). HT: 48-39; DYES Bangalore: 107 (Manoj 24, Kushal 17) bt MNK Rao Park BC: 67 (Akash 11, Vihan 9). HT: 56-34; GST & Customs: 74 (Dheeraj 20, Bhuvan 17) bt Southern Blues: 64 (Venkat 19, Adi 12). HT: 44-39; Bank of Baroda: 72 (Nagaraj 15, Mufeez 14) bt Beagles BC: 37 (Arpan 15, Achintya 12). HT: 39-24.

Multi-day matches in Sri Lanka: Dhruv Jurel (capt & wk), Sai Sudharsan, Devdutt Padikkal (vice-capt), Ruturaj Gaikwad, Harsh Dubey, Saransh Jain, Gurnoor Brar, Aqib Nabi, Yash Thakur, N Jagadeesan, Aman Mokade, Sheikh Rashid and Zeeshan Ansari.

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Monisha A.M., StudentSt. Flower English School has been a very special part of my life and has played a significant role in shaping not only my education but also my personality. Our school has always inspired students and provided an excellent environment to help them achieve their dreams. The guidance and encouragement of my teachers, along with the discipline instilled by the principal, were the main reasons behind my securing the first rank.



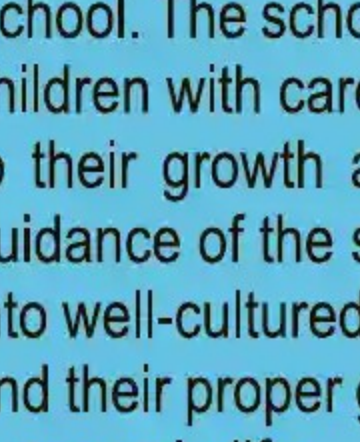
Siri Upare, StudentStudying in this school has been a wonderful experience in my life. Along with academics, it taught me self-confidence, discipline, and strong values. The school played a major role in shaping me into a better person. Therefore, St. Flower English School will always hold a special place in my heart.



Nidhi, StudentFrom my very first day as a student in this school until my SSLC (10th Standard) Board Examination, where I secured an outstanding score of 98.4%, this institution has been instrumental in my growth. The teachers and principal of St. Flower English School are the reason I have reached this level of success. This school helped me fulfill my dreams. Today, I am pursuing my MBBS degree at Saptagiri Medical College. The lessons I learned during my ten years here have provided a strong foundation for my life. I will always remain grateful to this institution.



As a parent, I am extremely happy and satisfied with the disciplined yet child-friendly approach of the management and staff of St. Flower English School. The school has excellent teachers who encourage children with care, dedication, and a genuine commitment to their growth and development. With the support and guidance of the school's leadership, children are nurtured into well-cultured individuals. The affection of the teachers and their proper guidance help students grow and achieve success in life.



Venisha Venkatesh , StudentSpeaking about our school, I secured 95% marks in my public examinations. This achievement was made possible through the support of the teachers and the care they showed toward students. Their guidance has brightened my future, and I will always remain grateful to this institution for helping shape my life and career.

Mrs. Girija R. Patil Every student needs proper guidance from teachers to discover and develop their talents and abilities. With nearly 36 years of rich experience, this school provides quality education through a positive academic environment, sports, scientific activities, and cultural programs. I strongly recommend this institution to parents who care about their children's overall development and bright future. The school helps students enhance their talents and achieve excellent academic results.



M. Madhu chandra Our daughter, Havitha, studied at St. Flower English School from LKG to 10th Standard. We sincerely thank the teachers and the school management for instilling discipline, self-confidence, and strong values in her throughout her schooling. We will always be grateful for the support and guidance provided by the school, which helped shape our daughter's bright future and personal growth.



Vidith N.V.St. Flower English School has excellent teachers who genuinely care about the future of their students. The teachers not only teach lessons effectively but also guide students in their studies and help them build a successful life. The school encourages all students to participate in various programs and activities. I am proud to have studied at this institution and to have received my education here.



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England ready to turn on the heat

Three Lions hope to end six decades of hurt at major events in Americas

WEST PALM BEACH (US), AFP

Coach Thomas Tuchel on Friday said World Cup hopefuls England will not use scorching heat and vast travel distances between venues as excuses as they target a "long" tournament campaign. England were scheduled to face New Zealand in a pre-tournament friendly in Tampa Bay, Florida, on Saturday, and have been preparing with training sessions in hot and humid West Palm Beach.

"We don't want it to be an

excuse. It will be tough. It will be hopefully a long World Cup," Tuchel told a press conference. "It will be a lot of travelling, it will be a lot of adversity from the heat, from humidity."

Hoping to end 60 years of hurt, England enter the tournament -- co-hosted by the United States, Mexico and Canada -- among a group of favorites led by the likes of France, Spain and defending champions Argentina.

Following their New Zealand tune-up, and a friendly against Costa Rica in Orlando on Wednesday, England will head to their training camp in Kansas City, where temperatures above 30 degrees Celsius and thunderstorms are forecast in the coming days.

The Three Lions will kick off their tournament on June 17 against Croatia in Dallas, where the mercury is set to hit 35 degrees Celsius next week.

If England progress beyond their group, they could face a testing trip to Mexico City for a high-altitude last-16 clash, with Miami a possible quarterfinal venue too. "That's also the task for us, and that's also what you want to achieve -- that atmosphere where you stay calm, where we stay patient, and where we adapt to the circumstances," said Tuchel.

"That's just what it takes to go through the tournament."

And despite the heat expected during the tournament, the manager made it clear that he would not abandon his hard-pressing tactical systems.

"There's a value in recovering the ball high, even if it brings risk, even if it is highly intense," said Tuchel.

England, who reached the final of the past two European Championships, are in Group L, which also contains Ghana, Panama and Croatia. An experienced Croatia beat a young England side in the semifinals of the 2018 World Cup.



Blessed with a fairly talented squad, England coach Thomas Tuchel (right) is hoping to lead the Three Lions to World Cup glory after 60 years. AFP

rienced Croatia beat a young England side in the semifinals of the 2018 World Cup.

This time, Tuchel said he was delighted by the amount of tournament-winning experience in his squad, which contains around a dozen players who won a trophy this year.

"We're very, very happy that we have a lot of winners... it just

lets your confidence grow in a genuine way, so it's not artificial," said Tuchel. "Players know that they can handle the pressure. Players know that they performed in finals."

The manager said he had a "clear idea of 14-15 starters that can start for us and should start for us and can carry this team" against Croatia.

Iran head to Mexico over visa row

ISTANBUL, AFP

Iran lashed out at the United States on Saturday for refusing visas to some of its World Cup squad support staff as the players were to leave Turkey for Mexico.

The row erupted just days before the June 11 start of the 2026 World Cup, which is being jointly hosted by the United States, Mexico and Canada.

The Iranian players, who have been at a training camp in the southern Turkish resort of Antalya since May 18, received their visas late on Friday, Washington's envoy to Turkey Tom Barrack said on X, hailing the work of the US embassy in Ankara in "processing visas for Iran's national football team".

But Iran's embassy to Turkey hit back on Saturday with a furious response, saying a "large" number of managerial

and executive staff and others had been denied visas.

"You have now escalated the deliberate and discriminatory treatment against Iran's national football team to its highest level," the embassy wrote on X.

"FIFA must hold the US accountable for violations of its rules and for the discriminatory treatment of Iran's national football team."

Iran's Football Federation, whose chief Mehdi Taj was reportedly among those denied a visa,

also hit out, describing the decision as "political interference in sport in its worst form".

"By extending its hostile behaviour towards the Iranian nation into the field of sport, the... US government has deprived Iran's national team of...

the opportunity to compete without discrimination," it said, pledging to pursue the matter with FIFA.

Scaloni gives positive update on Messi fitness

COLLEGE STATION (US), AFP:

Lionel Messi has taken a step forward in his injury recovery and could play a few minutes in Argentina's upcoming friendlies before their World Cup opener, coach Lionel Scaloni said Friday.

"Leo is doing well, he has already trained partly with the group, he's no longer completely separated," Scaloni said. "It's possible he'll play a few minutes in the friendlies. We'll see whether that's tomorrow's game or the other one."

Balerdi out of WC

Argentina and Marseille central defender Leonardo Balerdi has been ruled out of the World Cup with a calf injury, the world champions announced on Saturday, reports AFP from Paris.

The 27-year-old has suffered a muscle injury in his right leg.

Argentina have not yet named a replacement.

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JUDGMENT DAY



Nigam Nuggehalli

is a law professor who thinks that the law is too important to be left to the lawyers
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Text vs. Context: A complex case of judicial precedents

Every law student in India is required to study a course in legal philosophy that explores arcane issues such as the nature of rules and the open-endedness of the law. The fact that law students must mandatorily study legal philosophy is itself surprising for a profession that prides itself on its practicality. Bus drivers don't bother with the philosophy of bus driving, and plumbers don't bother with the philosophy of plumbing, but lawyers do. Why so? Because legal practice is prone to concepts that invite philosophical analysis. Perhaps in no other discipline are philosophical matters so central and yet so controversial. One such issue involves precedent, which came to the fore in the Supreme Court's recent decision in *Syed Iftikhar Andrabi v. National Investigation Agency, Jammu*.

In *Syed Andrabi*, a two-judge bench ruled on bail applications in a UAPA (Unlawful Activities [Prevention] Act) case and stated that it had reservations about a recent decision of a

coordinate bench (i.e., a bench of the same size) in *Gulfisha Fatima vs. State (Govt. of NCT of Delhi)* that denied bail in a similar UAPA case. I want to comment on this case from the point of the doctrine of precedent and judicial discipline, something the public outside of the law is somewhat aware of and yet has not completely come to terms with. This is not surprising, for lawyers, law professors, and judges struggle with these concepts as well.

In every legal system, the concept of *stare decisis* is critical: a court must follow its previous decisions, or precedents. *Stare decisis* brings stability to the legal system and makes the law predictable for citizens. A less-understood but equally important justification for *stare decisis* is that it ensures fairness; the citizens are assured the law will treat them the same way others in similar situations were treated before.

But here's the problem with precedent. It's really difficult to know what it means to follow a

previous decision. To address the issue of following precedent, the law has come up with more Latin words: *ratio decidendi* and *obiter dicta*. *Ratio decidendi* is the court's ruling that needs to be followed; every other observation of the court is merely *obiter dicta*, something that's *peripheral* to the main ruling and need not be followed. It is notoriously difficult to discern a case's *ratio decidendi*, as no case comes with a ready-made ratio; it has to be extracted from the case by lawyers through a careful review of the facts and the law applied.

In *Syed Andrabi*, the Supreme Court stated that on the issue of bail in UAPA cases, the binding precedent was *Union of India vs. K A Najeeb*, a 2021 decision. *Najeeb* was decided by a three-judge bench and therefore, a larger bench decision that bound the two-judge bench in *Syed Andrabi*. In *Najeeb*, the Court opined that if the accused had already been subject to a long incarceration and it was likely that a

timely trial was not possible, then ordinarily, bail should be granted. In *Syed Andrabi*, the Court followed *Najeeb* and then went one step further: it expressed reservations about a coordinate two-judge bench decision in *Gulfisha Fatima*, in which, faced with a similar UAPA case of long incarceration, the Court refused to grant bail.

The inference we derive from a reading of *Syed Andrabi* is that the bench in *Gulfisha Fatima* did not follow the precedent available to it. However, this is a highly fact-specific exercise because everything turns on whether the situation in *Gulfisha Fatima* was "ordinary" or not, and whether the circumstances' 'extraordinariness' was significant enough to outweigh long incarceration and trial delays when deciding to grant bail. The bench that decided *Gulfisha Fatima* referred to *Najeeb*, but believed it was not dealing with an ordinary situation. The matter has been referred to a larger bench to clarify the impact of the *Najeeb* decision, although one

wonders what clarification is required since both benches opine that they were being faithful to the *Najeeb* decision.

Following precedents, therefore, is not as easy as it appears because subsequent cases can have multiple ways of understanding what needs to be followed. Precedents matter more in the Supreme Court of India because, unlike the highest courts of other countries, it does not speak univocally. On any given day, benches of different sizes consisting of two, three, five or more judges decide on a variety of cases, making judicial discipline regarding precedents even more crucial. Extracting precedents from case law is an exercise in legal philosophy, but it also has grave practical consequences: citizens' lives and liberty depend on it. But one must not be surprised or dismayed that following precedent is such a complicated business. We must expect that legal decisions only reflect the complications of real life.

THE LIVING STREAM

The delights of Gulistan

Sentenced to death, the desperate captive cursed and abused the king. Not understanding his language, the king wondered what he had said. A high-ranking official, who was a kind man, explained that the captive had said that God loved those who restrained their anger and showed mercy towards others. The king pardoned the captive. Insisting that only the truth must be said in front of rulers, another official, who was differently natured, told the king that the captive had actually abused him. But the king stood by his earlier resolve. A good-intentioned falsehood, he remarked, was better than a truth aimed at causing strife.

Found in the first chapter titled *The Conduct of Kings*, this is the extraordinary opening story of *Gulistan* (Rose Garden), a book of moral stories written by Saadi Shirazi, the great Sufi and Persian poet, in 1258. In story after story, this chapter asks rulers to be kind towards their subjects. My favourite among these is when a cruel king asks a hermit which act of devotion would be most meritorious for him to perform, the hermit advises him to sleep at noon, as his subjects would then get a respite from tyranny during that time. Other concerns surface in these stories, too. A story asks rulers not to rejoice at the death of the enemy, for no life is everlasting. Another teaches that greater dignity lies in earning one's bread through one's own labour than in serving the king for a livelihood.

Late one night, Saadi was overwhelmed to think that he had misspent most of his life. Fifty years had gone by, and he had done so little: should he not make something of the few days left of his life? Each person who comes into this world builds a house that, after his departure, passes into other hands and is altered according to another's desires. The house remains perpetually unfinished. Another thought crossed his mind: since both the good and the wicked ultimately go to the grave, happy is the one who walks off with the prize of virtue. Overcome by such thoughts, Saadi cleansed his mind of vain words, renounced idle speech, and withdrew into silence. A friend of his discouraged him: If the tongue is tied, how can one know whether its owner sold jewels or petty goods. He continued: remaining silent when one ought to speak, and speaking when one ought to remain silent, both show a lack of judgment. Saadi yielded.

After a long walk, Saadi and his friend spent the night in a beautiful fruit orchard. In the morning, Saadi saw that his friend had gathered roses, basil, fragrant herbs and hyacinth in his arms to carry back. "The flowers won't last," he told him. "The wise have advised us to not get attached to anything transient." When the friend asked what had to be done now, Saadi offered to write a book called *Rose Garden*, whose freshness would never fade. Dropping his roses, the friend demanded that he keep his promise. This, Saadi's Preface explains, is how *Gulistan* came about.

Besides advice to rulers, *Gulistan* offers moral reflections on the character of dervishes, the significance of silence, contentment, love and youth, old age, education, and the art of conversation. All of these focus on shaping the conduct of humans towards each other.

As Prashant Keshavmurthy, a scholar of Persian literature and dear friend, pointed out to me, God appears in *Gulistan*'s Preface as a bountiful provider, only to disappear as an actor from the text thereafter. "This," he noted, "fundamentally distinguishes *Gulistan* from premodern Islamic understandings of history as the site of a moral drama overseen by God. Saadi's world in the main text is an exclusively human universe abandoned by God and His prophets."

Gulistan's composition in the form of non-sequential anecdotes is consistent with the absence in Saadi of any end vision to human life: "Neither the Muslim paradise of theologians awaits Saadi's humans nor the happiness that preoccupied Islamic (Aristotelian) philosophers."

Gulistan has been read across the Middle East, East Africa, Central Asia and South Asia for centuries. It was used in madrasas and makhtabs to teach Persian and impart moral lessons. Becoming available in European languages in the early 17th century and in several Indian languages in later times, *Gulistan* has delighted millions. It's unputdownable, as they say.



Chandan Gowda
The Vidyalshilp Professor looks for new ways of looking
@Chandan_Gowda73



Ashwin Mahesh
A social entrepreneur, founder of Mapunity and LVBL, co-founder, Lithium, wakes up with hope for the city and society, goes to bed with a sigh
@ashwinmahesh

The monsoon is back, but behind schedule and potentially weaker than in most years as the Indian Meteorological Department predicts a below-normal rainfall season. This has set off discussions about how different sectors of the economy will be affected and raised concerns for the livelihoods of millions of farmers. The monsoon is the big screen that everyone watches, but similar worries on a smaller scale emerge during flooding, landslides, etc. Clearly, when nature doesn't favour us, we worry.

But what about the other times? Do we value the rain, or the rivers that swell with it? Do we see the trees as more than wood? Is the ocean more than a nice view? Is a bee more than an insect that stings? Or are we wilfully blind to these questions because it suits us not to place a value on nature?

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disturbing it greatly will have dire consequences. But we've shrugged these off, telling ourselves that while these things are true, perhaps they won't come true in our lifetimes or we'll find someone else to pass the parcel to. We've even turned the warning on its head, arguing that if some places are heavily dependent on their resource bases, then it is critical to keep extracting them!

We have let the clock run, and a reckoning is no longer beyond the horizon. As the sea rises steadily, even a single severe coastal event can turn a prime address into a claim no one wants to hold. As the oceans get warmer, the fish we catch off our shores could swim away to other climes. The glaciers that feed our rivers in the spring could melt in the winter itself. Nature is risky, and the things we take for granted can change in ways that we don't fully account for.

Less than three years ago, Bellandur Lake

breached its banks, sending its sewage-filled waters gushing into homes along its periphery, including several of the city's priciest residences. I wondered then: what does knee-deep sewage do to a property's value, even if it sits on a large plot facing a water body? Even in this city of inflated housing prices, it must give some buyers pause to think they may be signing up to life on a toxic site.

We have counted land, buildings, roads, and ports as assets. We have treated the natural systems below them as scenery. That mistake has made many assets look safer than they are. A loan can move from one balance sheet to another. An insurer can sell part of its exposure. A developer can exit a project. A fund can package risk into another instrument. But when nature itself becomes unstable, the chain reaches its end.

The risks have crossed into the public realm

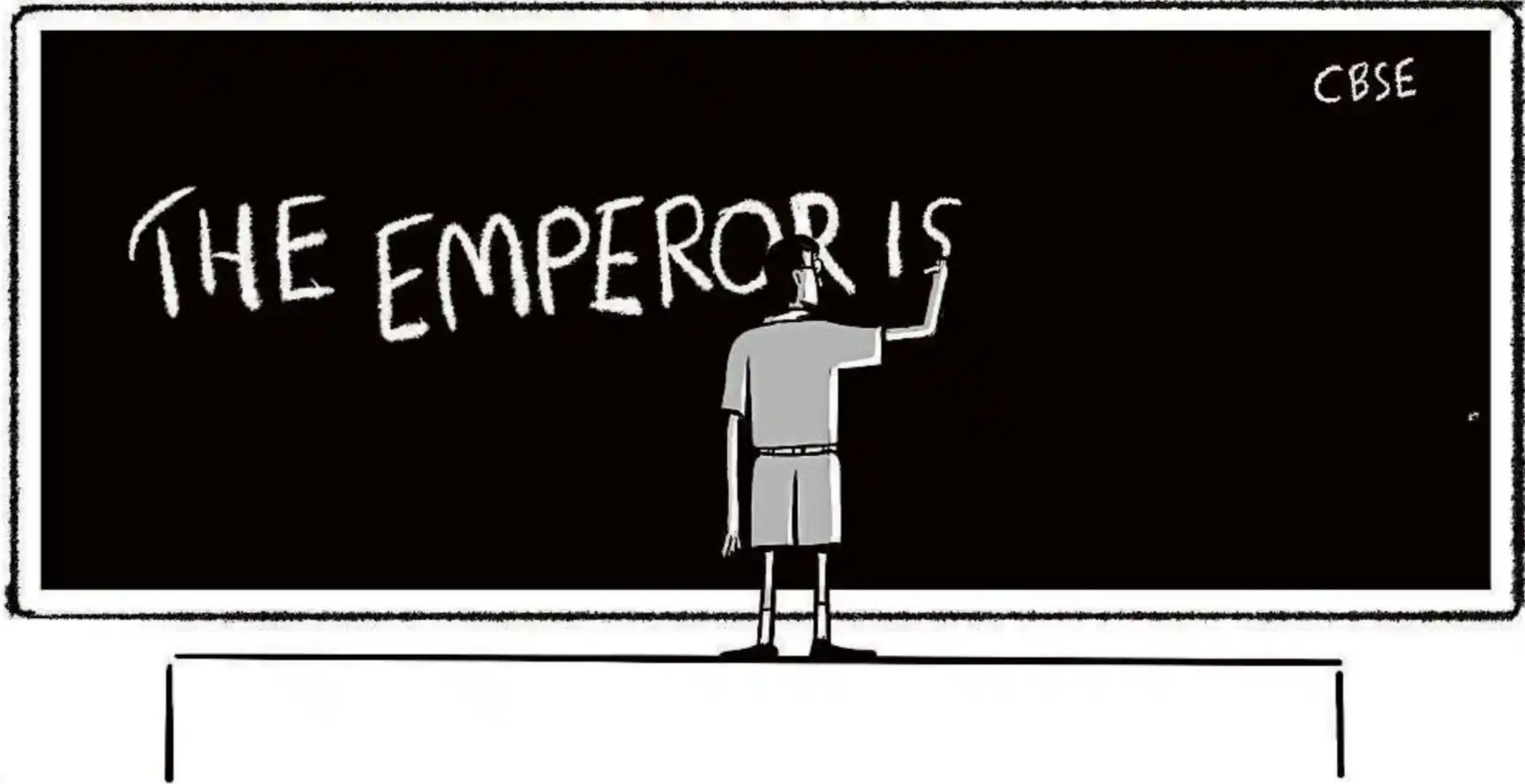
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Trucost, which assesses corporate environmental impact, found a few years ago that more than two-thirds of large listed companies are fundamentally misaligned with the goals of the Paris climate agreement. That is, the biggest firms in the world are not only acting as though they have no part to play in meeting responsible climate goals, they're also going about their businesses as though they face no risks from this indifference. An *Ostrich Index* of the stock market would not look very different from many existing ones!

The Indian experience isn't very different. Businesses are using up lots of nature capital without accounting for it in their books, and if such costs were included, a very large percentage of them would be unprofitable. That thought belongs in lots of conversations – not only in boardrooms and think tanks, but also in classrooms and cafes and in the corridors of State power.

The State must recognise that its default notion of development carries ecological costs, and even financial costs when public funds are used to recover from mistakes. Markets must stop pricing assets in isolation, ignoring the support system. And citizens must give up the comfortable idea that nature belongs to nobody until a crisis arrives.

(The author acknowledges Vinay Bale of the nature capital research firm Urvara for his inputs to this piece.)



GADFLY

Amma Ariyan: The message in the method

At this year's Cannes Film Festival, the late maverick Malayalam filmmaker John Abraham's *Amma Ariyan* (Report to Mother) was showcased in the Classics section, in a fresh 4K version restored by the Film Heritage Foundation. Actor Joy Mathew, who played the protagonist and the film's editor Bina Paul attended the screening.

Shot in black-and-white, *Amma Ariyan* dropped in 1986 and quickly ignited discourse on the means, the methods, and the message-making of cinema. At every critical stage of the filmmaking process, Abraham countered and subverted the predatory commercial structures of filmmaking by centring the community and its contributions. *Amma Ariyan* arrived in the middle of the parallel-cinema moment; revisiting the film now makes one wonder if that time, marked by the pushbacks of Abraham and others of his kind, even happened.

In the film, Purushan (Joy Mathew) is set to commence his journey to Delhi for higher studies. On the way to the railway station, he sees the dead body of a person he half-recognises. Unsettled, he returns home to tell his mother that it's his friend, Hari, whose body he saw. Hari had taken his own life, the police say, and Purushan has to "report" the death to Hari's mother, whose whereabouts Purushan and his friends have little inkling of. That is the springboard for a walking, riding, bussing, and boating tour through rural and semi-urban Kerala for Purushan and his mostly male Marxist comrades of many ages. There are the cops, there is the corpse, and there is verdant Kerala to venture

through to find the dead man's mother. Bina Paul masterfully edits a dynamic narrative that slips in nuance, tangential political information, and social commentary. Then, there is the visual mood of the story: the constant close-ups and the long and linear shots of people – invariably at head level – lend the 'arthouse' sensibilities the pacing of a mainstream film through atypical means.

Abraham famously involved people

Rahul Jayaram
teaches at the School of Film, Media and Creative Arts, R V University, Bengaluru
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Adivasi life. It incorporates musical rhythms from the *chenda*, rock, and cathedral, all while illuminating the tensions of the time.

Through the apparent story of a middle-class male who sets out seeking the mother of a dead friend, *Amma Ariyan* reverses itself, to say, 'No, this story is about you'. Who is Hari, really? Abraham does a *Rashomon*. His friends perceive him as a Naxalite, a musician, a betrayer to the revolution, a wayward man, and a loner. Purushan and Hari almost mirror one another, and it is evoked nonverbally through light, branches, and fallen flowers. Purushan is disconcerted even more, for he might be able to grasp now why Hari took his own life. Once understood, can he remain indecisive?

Abraham was part of the Odessa Collective, a gathering of film enthusiasts who aspired for a people's cinema that transcended the gatekeeping and pressures of the studio system. This element of resistance was integral to the ways in which the films were conceived, financed, and even taken to their audiences.

In 2001, the British Film Institute listed *Amma Ariyan* among the 10 best Indian films ever made. The film's messages reside in its means and methods. Raising important political and philosophical queries, it unambiguously places the burden to probe the existing social order on the part of the watcher. Its one great flaw is how Abraham addresses and portrays women, largely unable to wrench them off affixed stereotypes. Still a pungent and urgent watch, *Amma Ariyan* merits addition in our academic curricula.



Seshadri Chari
reads between the lines on big national and international developments from his vantage point in the BJP and the RSS
@seshadrichari

Evaluation errors in CBSE's Class 12 exam results, caused by a flawed On-Screen Marking (OSM) system, and discrepancies in reevaluation processes have raised the pitch of calls for extensive reform in the way India conducts its examinations. The government has been slow to respond to the concerns. After weeks since the row erupted, it has transferred the Board's top officials and ordered an inquiry into its procurement practices. The move provides a band-aid fix for a malaise that requires a surgical operation.

The glitches in the examination system prove beyond doubt that, in their present form, these entry points for higher education cannot do justice to the sheer number of aspirants, without risking a structural collapse. Over the years, these agencies and boards should have upgraded their technological capabilities and security algorithms. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 identifies technology as integral to its vision. It is upon the institutions and agencies to keep pace with this vision and build robust systems, backed with fool-proof implementation processes, contingency planning, and emergency response mechanisms.

Course correction will mean a shift away from bureaucracy-driven legacy administrative processes. Also due is a structural decentralisation of the agencies and guardrails that ensure legal accountability.

India's examination framework requires an overhaul. Transferring errant officials will not be enough to restore the confidence of the students and parents. There is an urgent need to study the shortcomings across higher education and propose structural corrections. For a nation aspiring to become the world's knowledge leader and aiming for a strong, vibrant economy by 2047, a thriving, industry-oriented, and affordable higher education system is non-negotiable. And this transformation cannot come on the back of reactive measures adopted in isolation – it calls for political will, a futuristic vision, and an actionable plan to match.

STATE, MARKET, SOCIETY

Nature and its wealth we choose to ignore

The monsoon is back, but behind schedule and potentially weaker than in most years as the Indian Meteorological Department predicts a below-normal rainfall season. This has set off discussions about how different sectors of the economy will be affected and raised concerns for the livelihoods of millions of farmers. The monsoon is the big screen that everyone watches, but similar worries on a smaller scale emerge during flooding, landslides, etc. Clearly, when nature doesn't favour us, we worry.

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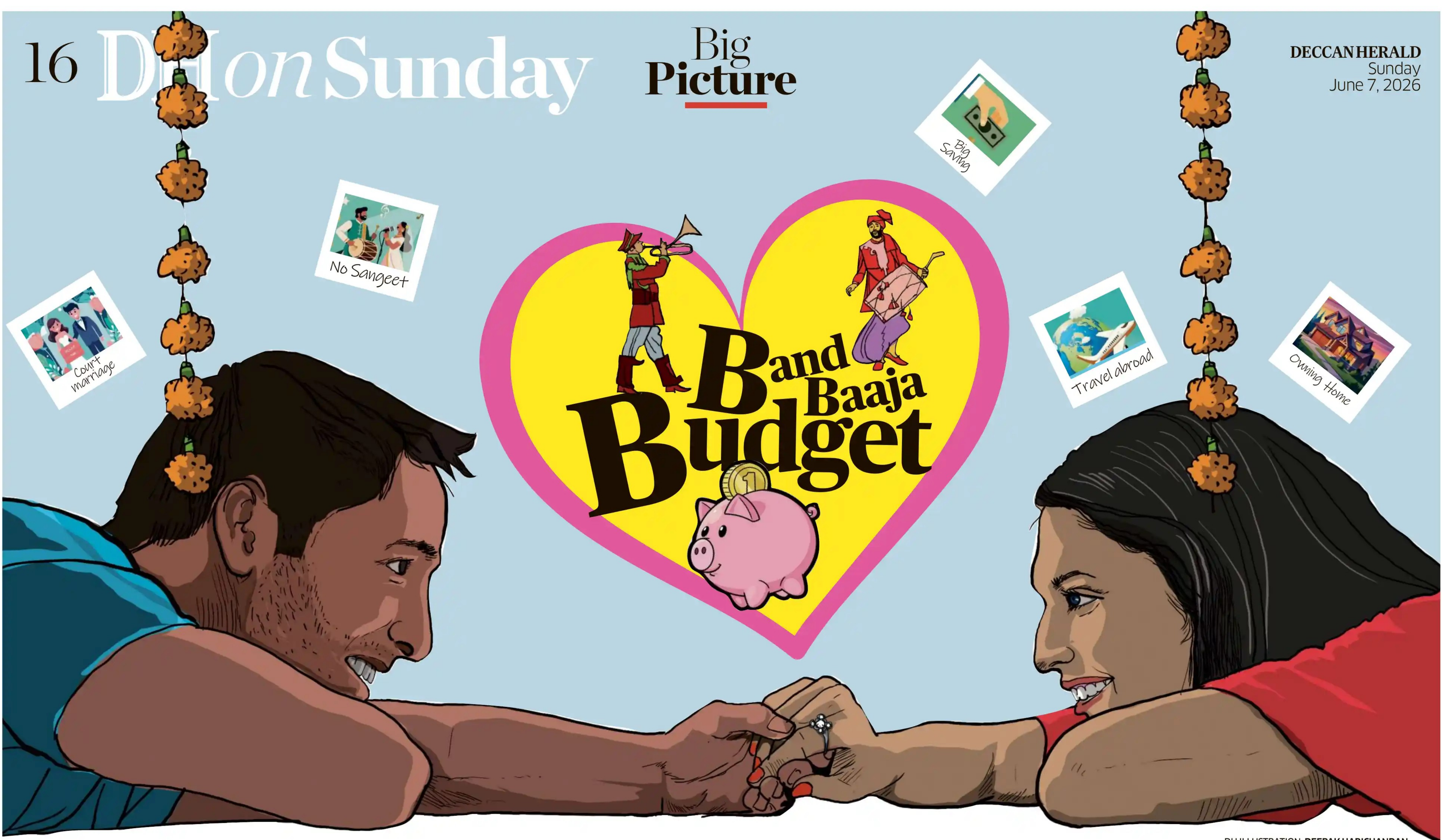
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DH ILLUSTRATION: DEEPAK HARICHANDAN

The guest lists are shrinking, the ceremonies are becoming simpler, and the money once reserved for lavish festivities is being redirected. In the first of a two-part series on the changing nature of Indian weddings, **Prachi Srivastava** explores why Gen Z is disrupting the ‘big fat Indian shaadi’ narrative in favour of micro celebrations

Shivani Singh, 29, didn’t begin planning her wedding with mood boards or carefully curated inspiration. Instead, she found herself sitting with her family and partner around a laptop, watching a YouTube tutorial on how to drape a saree.

Beyond that, very little was premeditated. “We just knew we were getting married,” she says. They headed to the court in that same spirit, excited and largely unconcerned with the details. The court wedding was wrapped up in a single day, followed by an intimate gathering of around 40 close friends and family. “It was chaotic, funny, and oddly perfect. Everyone was simply soaking in the moment,” she recalls.

“For me, it wasn’t a decision so much as who I’ve always been,” she adds. “My career and achieving financial freedom were always my top priorities, so I never really spent time dreaming about or planning a wedding. It was the only version of a wedding that ever made sense to me.”

Shivani isn’t an anomaly. She represents a growing segment of young Indians opting out of large-scale traditional weddings, not just in favour of intimacy, but to prioritise financial stability and experiences that endure long after the celebration itself.

Often called “micro-weddings”, this trend emerged during the Covid pandemic, when lockdowns and restrictions made larger gatherings impossible. But what began as a necessity has evolved into a deliberate choice for many young couples, reflecting a desire for celebrations that feel authentic while remaining financially sensible.

“I’d rather invest in real estate and take my family on a vacation than spend on a few days of celebration,” Shivani says. “I’ve always valued long-term security and meaningful experiences over one-time, high-expense events.” Increasingly, this shift reflects

a broader cultural rethinking of weddings in urban India, shaped by changing priorities, aspirations, and ideas of value.

Rethinking the big day

Wedding planners are witnessing this recalibration firsthand. Darshan S, founder of We Plan for You, a Bengaluru-based event company, has noticed a steady shift in how clients approach marriage. “The pandemic changed how people think about weddings. Gradually, couples are prioritising financial planning and smart investments over lavish celebrations,” he says. “There is a growing emphasis on the overall experience, with personalised elements gaining traction. Couples are increasingly asserting that weddings are about them, not the scale.”

Pinkle Mehta, founder of Gatha Events, Pune, observes a similar trend. “Travel and buying a home are becoming significant priorities for couples today,” she notes. “Budgets were once driven by social expectations or the desire to showcase scale. Now, couples focus on what truly matters to them and what they will genuinely enjoy.”

The WedMeGood Annual Wedding Industry Report 2025–2026 highlights a nuanced shift in spending patterns, even as the average wedding budget climbs to 39.5 lakh, marking an 8% year-on-year increase, according to the platform’s data. The change, as Pinkle points out, isn’t about cutting costs but spending more deliberately. Couples are increasingly opting for practical venues, while temple weddings have seen a quiet revival, registering a 4–5% rise in recent years. The focus, consequently, is moving away from overt display towards a more thoughtful approach to celebration.

Spend less, live more

As Gen Z revisits the wedding format, financial prudence has become a defining factor in decision-making. For Nidhi Gupta, 27, a finance influencer, the approach was both practical and deliberate.

“We skipped multiple functions like the haldi, mehendi, and sangeet, opting instead for a court marriage alongside a mandir ceremony,” she explains. “That helped us cut nearly 70% of our wedding expenses, much of which we redirected into investments, including gold and silver jewellery.”

Her decision reflects a broader realignment among young urban Indians. In metros, the cost of sustaining an aspirational lifestyle has risen sharply, with 20–50 lakh often going into creating a refined, magazine-worthy living environment. Against this backdrop, spending a similar amount on a single event is increasingly being questioned. “Couples are not necessarily stricter, but more informed. They usually come in with a clear understanding of budget ranges and are open to flexibility if they see justification and value in what they’re spending,” Pinkle notes.

Darshan echoes this sentiment. “Value for money has always been central to weddings. Many clients we encounter today have already done their homework on finances before meeting us for planning.”

Beyond finances, a more experience-led mindset is emerging. Krisha Kothari, 27, who hosted a simple home wedding instead of a multi-day celebration, describes her decision as “deeply intentional”. “We wanted something simple, beautiful, and personal, and that’s exactly what we created,” she says.

“There was no excess, no pressure, no noise, just the people who truly matter and an experience that felt calm, intimate, and real.” That choice, she adds, was shaped by a longer-term perspective. “We looked at it from a larger life perspective. Instead of putting a massive amount of money into one or two days, we chose to invest in a life we’re excited about living every day after that.”

Travel forms a central part of that vision. “We’ve already explored places like the United Kingdom, Japan, Spain, Indonesia, Thailand, France, and Switzerland. For us, those experiences feel far

more valuable and lasting than a single large celebration.” At its core, she believes, the question itself is changing; not “What will people say about our wedding?” but “What kind of life do we want after it?”

From display to meaning

Perna Kohli, founder of the mental health organisation Mind Tribe in Gurgaon, sees this shift as a fundamental rethinking of the value of weddings.

“Value is becoming more personal and less performative. For many young couples, it now centres on financial security, emotional connection, and shared experiences, not just optics,” she notes, describing it as a sign of a generation that is more self-aware and less dependent on external validation.

According to Perna, much of this evolution is linked to greater financial freedom. “Financial independence brings psychological independence. When people earn, they feel empowered to make their own choices. Where decisions were once family-led, couples are now co-deciding. With more women financially independent, there’s a stronger voice at the table, leading to more balanced decisions.” She also cautions against assuming that redirecting money automatically leads to better outcomes. “It is important to question whether redirecting money automatically leads to better long-term decisions. Financial maturity is not just about saving, it’s about how wisely that money is eventually used.”

Social media has also influenced these choices. Platforms like Instagram have amplified the production values associated with weddings, raising expectations around styling, scale, and experience. At the same time, they have helped normalise a visual language that celebrates understated simplicity and intentionality.

“There is a social media paradox,” Perna says. “While Gen Z may be moving away from large-scale weddings, the desire to pres-

ent a curated, aesthetic version online remains.”

The family factor

The longevity of this shift is still unfolding. In Indian family structures, weddings are rarely just personal decisions. They are social events shaped by tradition, expectation, and community perception. For many parents, a smaller wedding can signal financial limitation or a break from convention.

“Families often lean towards larger gatherings and bigger guest lists, while couples prefer more curated, personalised celebrations with fewer people but better experiences. In most cases, the final decision depends on who is financially contributing, but increasingly, a middle ground is being found through conversation and prioritisation,” Pinkle explains.

Nidhi, for her part, chose a balanced approach: a court and temple ceremony followed by a celebratory gathering to honour her parents’ sentiments. “This balance ensured that everyone felt respected and included, and in the end, our families were happy and satisfied with how everything turned out.”

Shivani’s experience was more complex. While her own family was supportive, her inter-caste marriage was not accepted by her in-laws. “When the marriage itself wasn’t accepted, discussing how big or small the celebration felt irrelevant,” she says. At home, her father prioritised legality, while her mother brought financial wisdom, supporting the decision to skip a large wedding and invest instead.

Krishna approached her situation with patience. “There were some differences in expectations initially, given how weddings are traditionally celebrated, but over time our families understood that this was genuinely what we wanted.”

Santosh Desai, CEO of Future Brands Consulting and a noted voice on Indian consumer culture and society, interprets the tension as a subtle but important shift in power dynamics. “The long-held notion of weddings as a social obligation, where parents

host celebrations as repayment, no longer holds the same weight. Increasingly, weddings are shifting from family-driven functions, with couples as passive participants, to personal, intentional occasions defined by the couple.” Perna offers a more measured perspective. “A smaller wedding can communicate thoughtfulness, financial foresight, even a certain sophistication. But the intent matters. If it comes from clarity, it is healthy. If it becomes another form of comparison, then it’s just the same pattern in a different form.” What emerges is a broader shift, she suggests.

While tradition continues to hold meaning, it is being reinterpreted in ways that prioritise authenticity and mindfulness over community-driven expectations. This mindset extends beyond Gen Z. Divya Mishra, 32, who did away with extra ceremonies and opted for a simple Arya Samaj temple wedding with immediate family, articulates this with clarity. “I trust that I’m capable of making my own decisions.” Over time, she adds, “I’ve come to realise that I need to choose what brings me genuine contentment, even if that means disappointing a few people along the way.”

The freedom to choose

Perna believes the shift is not temporary. India is entering a phase of coexistence. According to her, large, traditional weddings will continue to hold cultural legitimacy, but the long-standing belief that bigger is better has been fundamentally questioned. Santosh offers a similarly measured view. “While grand celebrations still dominate for the majority, a discernible change in sensibility is underway, though it will take time to fully manifest.”

At its core, the transformation is less about scale and more about choice. In a country where weddings have long followed a script, that shift may be the most significant departure of all. As Perna concludes, “More people will feel empowered to choose differently, and that is the real change.”

MIXED BAG

‘Mixed Bag’ is your Sunday potpourri — an assortment of snappy articles, engaging ideas and snackable nibbles about this and that, from here and there. Dip in!

No diamond ring? Put a string on it!

Giuliette Pfeiffer kept wondering if Will Aftring would ever propose. “Does he not want to marry me anymore?” she asked a friend in September 2024, a year after she and Aftring began talking seriously about marriage. Her friend’s advice: “Just ask him.”

As soon as Pfeiffer, 29, an outpatient therapist at a mental health center in Appalachia, who was fighting a cold and wearing sweats, got off the phone, she made a beeline for Aftring in their kitchen in Asheville, North Carolina, where he was fixing lunch.

“Hey, I need to ask you something insane,” she said, and after a beat added: “Why haven’t you proposed to me yet?” Aftring, 30, a software



People are looking for creative ways to get engaged.

developer, knew he wanted to marry her from the first year they met, in 2017, but got stuck on a technicality. “I wanted to make sure the ring was perfect,” he told her, to which she replied, “I wouldn’t care if you proposed to me with a piece of twine.”

After spotting a ball of beige cotton yarn that Pfeiffer, a crafter, planned

to use to crochet a beach cover-up, he snipped off a piece.

“That man put a hole in the floor, dropping to his knee so fast,” she said with a laugh, and then tied the yarn in a half bow around her finger. They cried and hugged. She soon popped the half-bow into a frame, which now holds a special place on their bookcase. In November, they married in a civil ceremony at Buncombe County Courthouse in Asheville.

Although a ring accompanied 96% of proposals, according to The Knot’s 2026 wedding study, some couples took a more unconventional, creative approach to getting engaged. In some cases, a traditional ring came later.

For Evelyn Ivey, 56, words alone were enough. She did some quick thinking one rainy evening in March 2022 as Tom Rotelli, 60, revisited a sensitive issue as he sat on the couch and she filled an electric teakettle. “Why are we doing this?” he asked,

questioning if she was ever serious about him.

Rotelli, a life coach and a faculty member in the department of applied positive psychology at the University of Pennsylvania, has a 20- and 22-year-old son. His previous marriage ended in divorce, as did hers.

To get her feelings across once and for all, Ivey, a veterinarian, marched over to him. “Thomas Rotelli, will you marry me?” she said, putting her hands on his shoulders. (She’s 5-foot-4; he’s 6-foot-2.) Without hesitating, he said yes. “She folded into my lap,” he said. “And, oh, we kissed.”

“Basically, the standard engagement proposal is supposed to produce two pieces of evidence that the couple is engaged: a story and a ring,” said David Schweingruber, an assistant professor of sociology at the University of Iowa, who has co-written three papers on proposals. “There are people who do not follow the standard

script,” he said. Like Katie Leonard, 49, who proposed to Rob Sparks, 43, in January 2021 outside the Philadelphia Museum of Art by Fairmont Waterworks when it was 10 degrees.

She handed him quite a rock — literally. It was a heart-shaped reddish granite stone that she had found on the beach in Encinitas, California, and had given him two years earlier, and secretly took back.

“I picked you up intending to throw you back,” said Leonard, a massage therapist whose previous marriage ended in divorce, and who has two young sons. “But you took my heart in your big warm hands and held onto it. I want to hold you for the rest of my life.” The couple, who live in Wilmington, Delaware, were married in October 2022, before 21 guests, outside the historic Hill-Physick House in Philadelphia.

He keeps the rock on his desk.

NYT

FEEDBACK
Like this story? Write to us at dhonsunday@deccanherald.co.in

**ASTROSPEAK**

Gurujii Shrii Arnav



Scan the QR code to read the weekly horoscope

Through the eyes of a covert operative, renowned author **S Hareesh** expertly reconstructs a turbulent moment when Travancore stood apart and resisted the march of history, writes **Nandita Bose**

Whispers from a dying kingdom

The Kingdom of Thiruvithamkoor (Travancore), among the first princely states to refuse accession to independent India in 1947, held out as a sovereign kingdom until 1949, when events forced it towards the inevitable. Purportedly written by an eyewitness to the times, August 17 combines dry acceptance with deep research into the realities on the ground, while cleverly juxtaposing genres in a manner typical of, yet extending, S Hareesh's inimitable style.

The story is told from the point of view of a CID operative, a man who remains unseen by assimilating seamlessly into crowds. "The obliging boatman usually wanted you to fulfil their curiosity in return for a ride. Name, native place, caste, purpose of visit — they asked questions that dug deep, even into one's past life, as though they were on a mission not to let anyone live with even a little bit of privacy. Making up lies was an unavoidable part of my job."

The protagonist is politically astute, familiar with the workings of every movement and its offshoots.

He knows, for instance, that many political meetings thrive on gushti, wrestling as a spectator sport. "The hypocrisy! Those who preached that violence is a sin wallow in the enjoyment of bodily harm as an art form!"

At every stop, he assumes a new identity: a buyer of copra, a Vaalar from Vaikom, or a Mar Thoma Christian travelling to Calicut and beyond to study farming in unfamiliar territories, where he encounters simple folk like Devasia and Elikkuty. Carefully steering conversations in particular directions, he spends each evening transcribing everything he has observed.

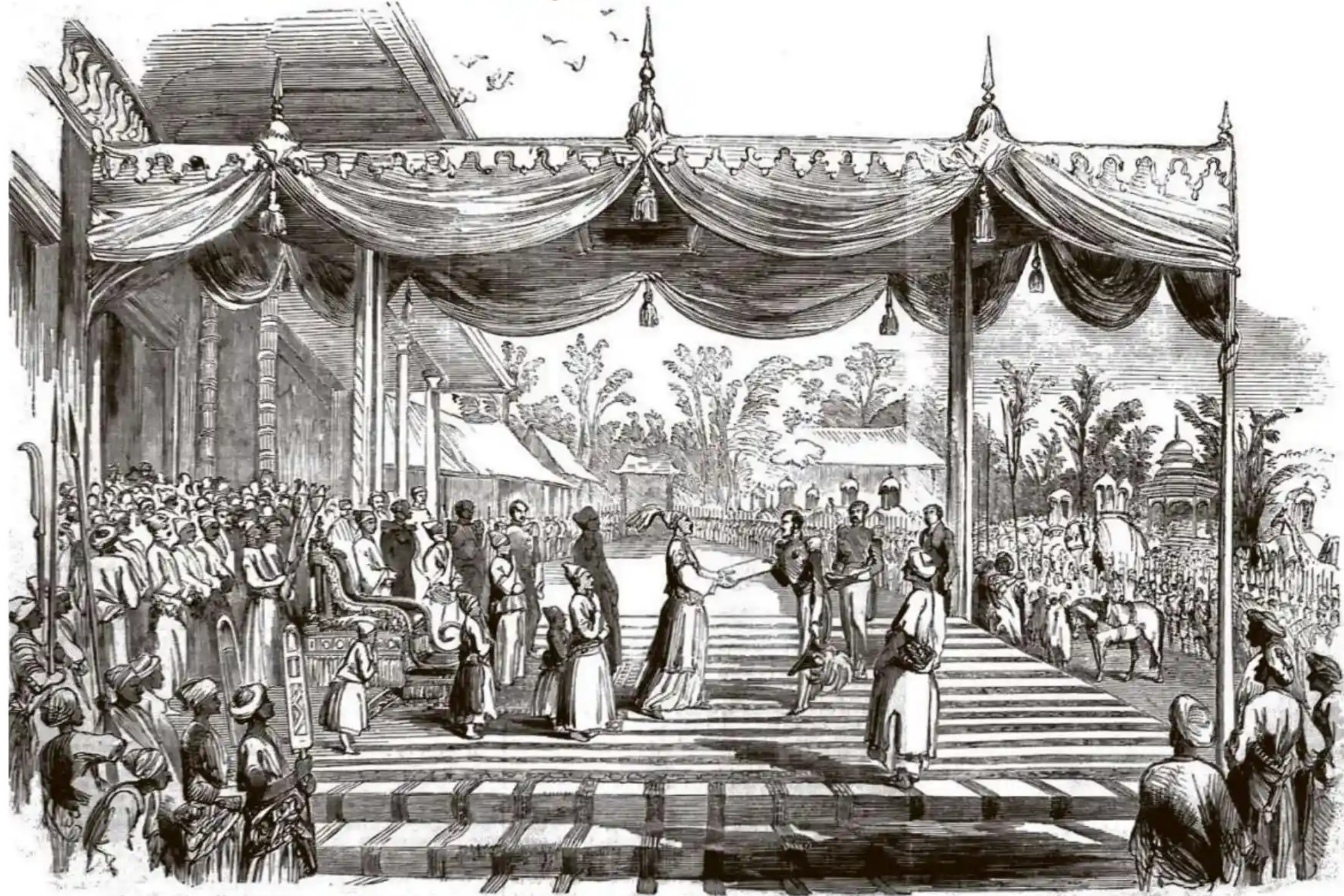
In doing so, he uncovers not only the thoughts of the people he meets but also the larger picture of their struggles and stories, stitching together a patchwork quilt of the countless unnamed individuals who constituted the state before and after its brief tryst with independence.

Essentially, this is a book that encompasses many of history's failures by chronicling, deeply and honestly, one failure in particular: the one that matters personally to the writer.

The erudition and depth of research are staggering. "They must now be living a life of plenty or penury, alone or with a family, engaged in agriculture or trade or a government job or burglary or begging or fishing or small-time politics or card games or pimping. Why should such men come around here to have a look? And when they did, were they laughing or weeping inside? Or were they ridiculing themselves on finding how everything had, in the tide of time, turned into a big joke?"

Clearly a passion project, the novel ensures that although its canvas is vast, every inch of it receives due attention.

This is a very Malayalam book, both in the best and most challenging sense. So steeped is it in local flavour that it doubles as a compendium of cuisine, drinking habits, folklore, grassroots social structures and regional histories, alongside the politics and political leaders who shaped them. It goes bone-deep into the local psyche. The names of districts, villages and their defining characteristics roll off the tongue. "Lasar, who



The author moves effortlessly from personal anecdotes to the full glare of history in motion and back again. Seen here are the courtiers of the Maharaja of Travancore Uthram Thirunal Marthanda Varma, receiving a letter from Queen Victoria being delivered by the British Resident, William Cullen, on November 27, 1851.

(PIC COURTESY: WIKIMEDIA/ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS)

is Chakrapani, who is Bhasi... An alias inside an alias inside another alias!"

The English-language reader, however, can only guess at the significance of many caste references and local markers. Often, one looks to the translator to bridge that gap. When those explanations are absent, some of the author's intentions remain inaccessible.

Yet neither the scope nor the execution can be questioned. Even the biographical sketches of politicians and leaders scattered throughout the text attest to meticulous documentation. But the novel offers much more than a historical record. Hareesh moves

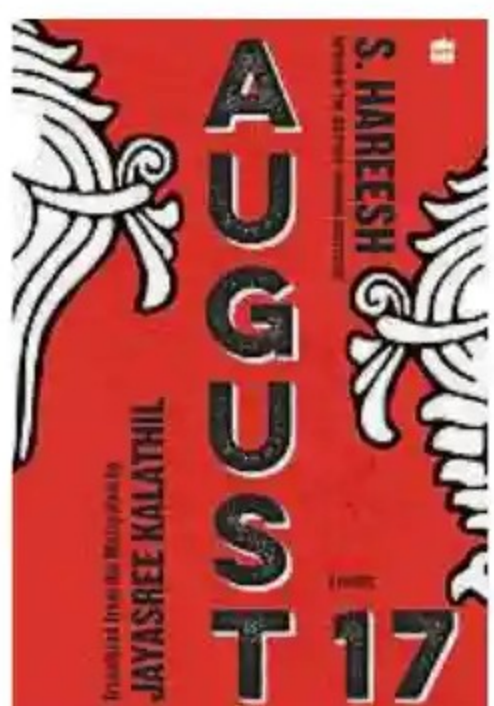
effortlessly from personal anecdotes to the full glare of history in motion and back again. The text captures a way of life that has disappeared, while also recording how ordinary people adapted and endured.

"By dusk, Thiruvambady was cloaked in the mild fragrance of charayam. If anyone unused to a day's hard work swallowed a mouthful of this potent arrack brewed from paddy by the chettans, their story would come to a swift end."

Some passages leave the reader devastated. "I wanted to sleep. I flipped myself over in the amniotic fluid." Others are quietly philosoph-

ical. "People like me were at risk of falling into a trap: the tendency to think that the assumed identity we were living under for a while was our real identity. So, it was important to always tell ourselves, 'This isn't me, isn't me, isn't me.'"

It takes a monumentally skilled and perceptive mind to pull off an epic work so firmly rooted in the traditions and realities of its land. More importantly, August 17 serves as a masterclass in how history can be handled, written and rewritten, gently and brutally at the same time. With this work, S Hareesh once again asserts the full force of his literary power.



AUGUST 17
S Hareesh
Harper, pp 432,
Rs 599

THAT ONE BOOK

Facing the future with grit & grace

Downton Abbey and One Fine Day, though decades apart, both explore how world wars and a fading empire impacted Britain's society, writes **Saudha Kasim**

If you were to watch that very soapy yet finely detailed paean to the British aristocracy, Downton Abbey, as many times as I have, certain things stand out: the servants (and the Dowager Countess) were given the most cutting dialogues, the films aren't a patch on the TV series, and the Earl of Grantham's household shrank realistically through the years, signalling the changing times. The first episodes take place in a grand house with a full complement of housemaids, cooks, footmen and butlers; the final film showed the family purchasing (the horror!) a London flat while whittling down their staff.

A decade or so separates the fictional worlds of Downton Abbey and Mollie Panter-Downes' 1947 novel, One Fine Day.

Yet there is much in common in terms of themes: the impact of two world wars on a feudal society that has existed for centuries, and the fading influence of the British Empire. And, of course, the lack of servants who'd hitherto kept the households of both the landed gentry and the middle classes running.

One Fine Day takes place on a hot summer's day, not long after the Second World War has ended and is told mostly through the perspectives of three members of the Marshall family: Laura, the wife, Stephen, the husband, and Victoria, their daughter. The novel has been compared to Virginia Woolf's Mrs Dalloway. Both stories are set in the aftermath of the world wars; Panter-Downes uses free indirect speech to meld both the third-person point of view and her characters' inner worlds, just like Woolf, and the women at the heart of both novels set out on individual quests.

Clarissa Dalloway steps out of her house to buy flowers and get ready for her party, while Laura Marshall goes out to buy groceries and retrieve the family's runaway dog. If you thought nothing much happened in Mrs Dalloway (except for a poet's mishap with iron railings), even less action takes place in One Fine Day.

And yet what a transporting read it is, a portrait of a world that, as the novel's epigraph from As You Like It says, has seen better days. There is deprivation around, along with physical remnants of war — barbed wire and German POWs working the fields. Then there are the ghosts of men killed in the battles and the women crushed under bombs who haunt the quintessential English landscape. But new life is coming through in this hot summer: the Marshalls' gardener didn't make it back, but their gooseberry bushes are heaving with fruit, and the plants grow with unruly vibrance. Stephen wants to bring some order to the space, while Victoria prefers it to remain wild and free.

The main conflict in One Fine Day results from male expectations of continuing domestic traditions rubbing up against the female desire for freedom in this new world. When the men were away during the war, the social norms were more relaxed, reflects Laura — "...she had snatched her meals anywhere. But now there was a man in the house again, they faced each other over polished wood, branching candlelight, the small ivory electric bell which was nothing but a joke."

When Laura sees one of the big houses that will soon become an agricultural training centre, her immediate thoughts are not to empathise with her friends on the loss of their family home, but "All those windows, she thought in horror. For the rest of her life, now, she would see things from the point of view of cleaning them. Confronted by a masterpiece of architecture, she would think merely how much floor to sweep, how many stairs to run up and down."

Though the narrative of One Fine Day is threaded through with loss, Mollie Panter-Downes' prose is marked with sweet musicality and buoyancy. The reader knows that none of these characters is about to have a life-changing epiphany — this is not a story in which a character walking away from their life would be the brave and bold choice. Instead, true courage here is knowing the future is uncertain but choosing to face it with resilience and grace.

That One Book is a monthly column that does exactly what it says — it takes up one great classic and tells you why it is (still) great. The author is a writer and communications professional. She blogs at saudha.substack.com

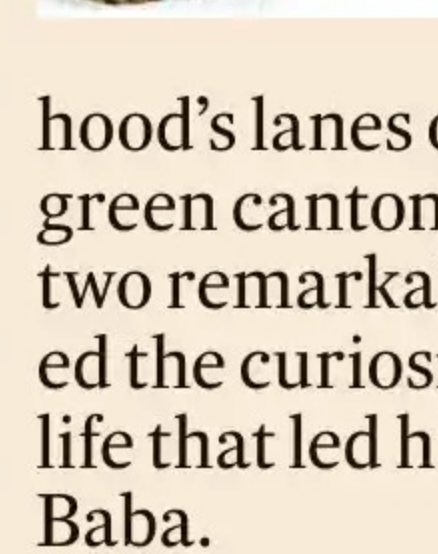
MOODBOARD

These thought-provoking books examine the beauty, fragility and the future of our planet while also telling a fascinating story. Essential reading for anyone seeking to understand the environmental challenges of our time.

Ghosts On Peepal Trees by Peepal Baba (Penguin):

This is the memoir of Swami

Prem Parivartan, known to millions as Peepal Baba: one of India's most respected environmentalists. Drawn from his handwritten notes, the stories transport you into his childhood's lanes of Dehradun and the green cantonment of Pune, where two remarkable women inculcated the curiosity and respect for life that led him to become Peepal Baba.



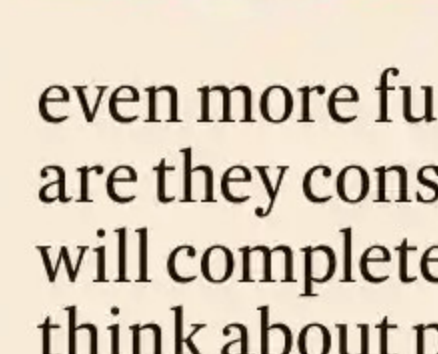
When The Forest Breathes by Suzanne Simard (Penguin):

Traillblazing ecologist Suzanne Simard has watched as timber companies leave forests at higher risk for wildfires, water crises, and plant and animal extinction. But her research has the potential to chart a new course. The forest, she reveals, is a symphony of finely honed cycles of regeneration

that hold the key to protecting our planet.

The Light Eaters by Zoe Schlanger (Fourth Estate):

Plants can not only communicate with each other, but they can also communicate with other species of plants and animals, allowing them to manipulate animals to defend or fertilise them. So look again at the potted plant, or the grass or the tree and wonder: are plants intelligent? Or perhaps ask an even more fundamental question: are they conscious? This book will completely redefine how you think about plants.



Mood Board is a column that presents thematic lists of books on hot-button topics.

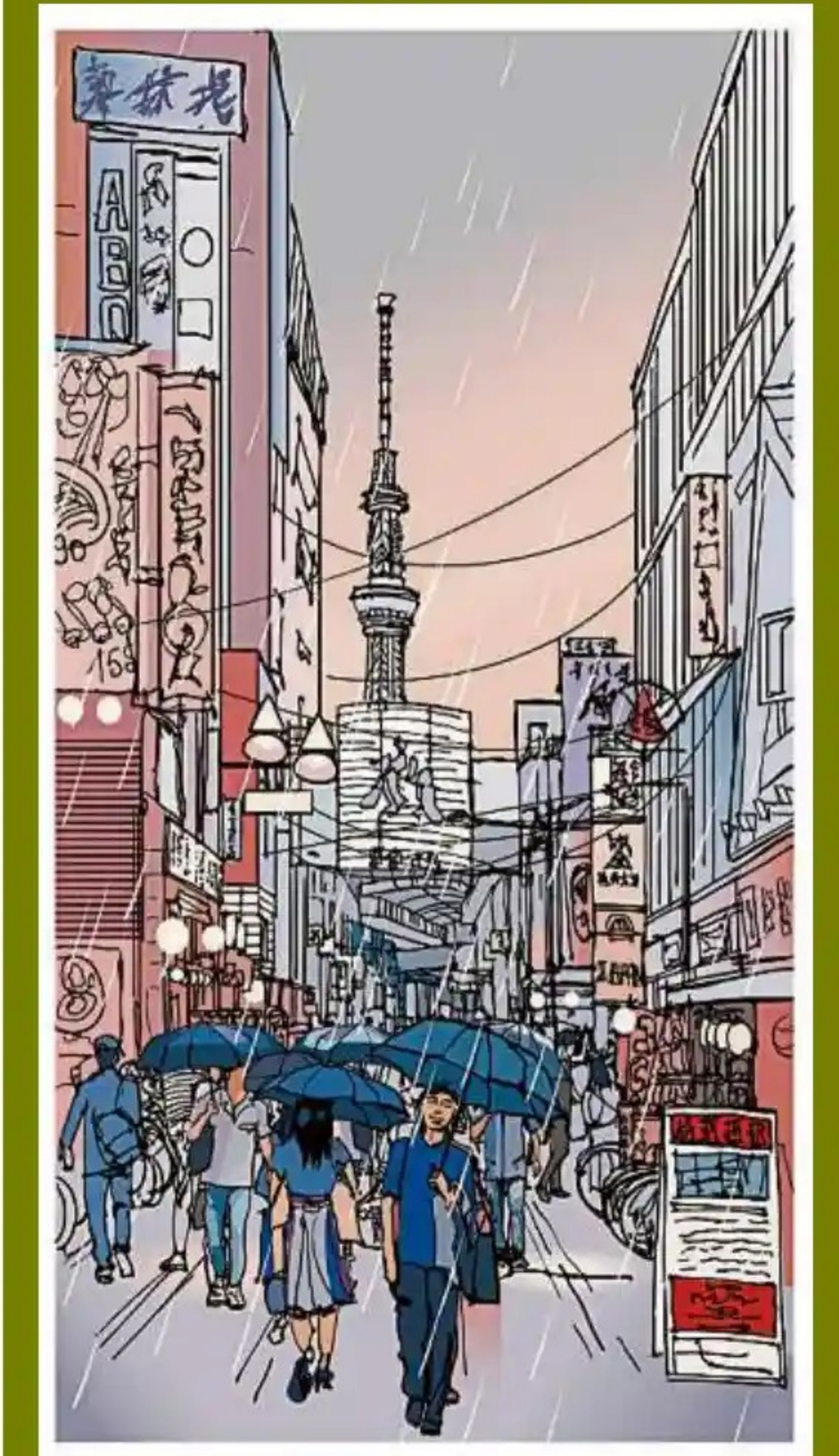
Dreams that sigh beneath neon lights

Mieko Kawakami has returned four years after being shortlisted for the International Booker Prize for Heaven. In her latest novel, Kawakami extends the themes of All the Lovers in the Night while venturing into the world of crime and the Japanese underworld at the turn of the century. Translated from the Japanese by Lauren Taylor and Hitomi Yoshio, Sisters in Yellow is a compelling literary exploration of a young woman's struggle for freedom and survival in a profoundly unjust world.

In 2020, as Japan began shutting down because of the spread of the coronavirus, Hana stumbles upon a news article about a woman named Kimiko who is standing trial for a series of crimes. She is unsettled by the name and age of the accused. Her thoughts drift back to the Kimiko she knew twenty years earlier, when Hana was 20, and Kimiko was 40. As the memory persists and Hana worries that the past might resurface after two decades, Kawakami draws readers into late-1990s Japan. We follow Hana as a young woman who drops out of school, leaves her mother's home, and escapes to Tokyo, where she works in a bar run by Kimiko. She befriends girls her age, but before long finds herself drawn into an underworld of theft, scams and hidden cash. Powerful, engrossing and richly evocative, Sisters in Yellow holds the reader in its grip long after the final page.

Kawakami has the skill to write about women without becoming jarring or preachy. The prose and its feminist undercurrent are subtle. Rather than confronting readers with overt declarations about women's condition, she takes her time, and with a novel spanning more than 430 pages, she does so with considerable appeal. We not only come to understand Hana and her struggle to survive in a world

In this evocative novel, the author narrates the stories of young women facing exploitation and learning to survive in a world stacked against them, writes Rahul Singh



The novel explores the nightlife and the criminal underworld of 1990s Tokyo. PIC FOR REPRESENTATION

that has largely been hostile to her, but also develop an affinity for the other women who populate the novel: Ran, Momoko, Kotomi and Kimiko. Kawakami is telling a story about what it meant to be a young woman in Japan during the late 1990s and early 2000s, particularly a poor one working in the bars and pubs industry.

This is as much a historical novel as it is a contemporary one. Kawakami immerses readers in a world that feels distant, fleeting and transient. It was

the turn of the century, when surveillance was becoming increasingly common in Japan's public spaces. Underage girls like Hana, Ran and Momoko became conduits through which the underworld operated. Kawakami is meticulous in creating an immersive reading experience, displaying a keen eye for detail. From patterns of consumption to the mechanics of scams and theft carried out through young women, the novel captures its milieu with remarkable precision.

The novel's greatest strength lies in its momentum. Unlike Kawakami's previous works, which are more contemplative, Sisters in Yellow is propelled by events that alter the course of its characters' lives. Here, Kawakami turns her attention to the political economy of the underworld. The shift is striking, and she excels at revealing the labour women perform within these illicit networks, even as men continue to dominate them.

More often than not, however, Kawakami can be found repeating herself. Whether this is a deliberate narrative choice or a technical weakness remains open to debate. Hana's first-person narration is charged with emotional intensity, and readers are willing to follow her wherever she leads. Yet her dreams, observations and reflections often circle the same territory. The recurring fear of losing the money is an effective motif, underscoring the vulnerability that shapes Hana's life. The repeated emphasis on the colour yellow, Kimiko's cleaning rituals, and Ran and Momoko's routines of eating and watching television, however, can feel excessive.

What ultimately remains with the reader is the enduring poignancy of Hana's story, and of a moment in Japan that is now largely lost to a rapidly changing world. The past Hana tries to bury, recasting it as a story of innocence exploited and discarded, continues to return both to her and to the reader. It raises unsettling questions about the selective nature of memory, what we choose to preserve, and what we allow ourselves to forget. In the end, Sisters in Yellow reaffirms Kawakami's place as a writer deeply interested in the human heart and the forces that shape it.

What if grief drained your world of colour and you had to find a way to paint it back? From the author of the international bestseller As Long As the Lemon Trees Grow comes a deeply moving and unforgettable story of loss, identity, resilience, and the healing power of art.

After the sudden death of her mother, Jihad hopes that transferring to an elite high school will offer her a fresh start. But instead, she finds herself isolated and judged as the only Muslim student, marked by her hijab and even her name. Surrounded by suspicion and quiet hostility, trusting anyone feels impossible. Only one classmate shows her kind-

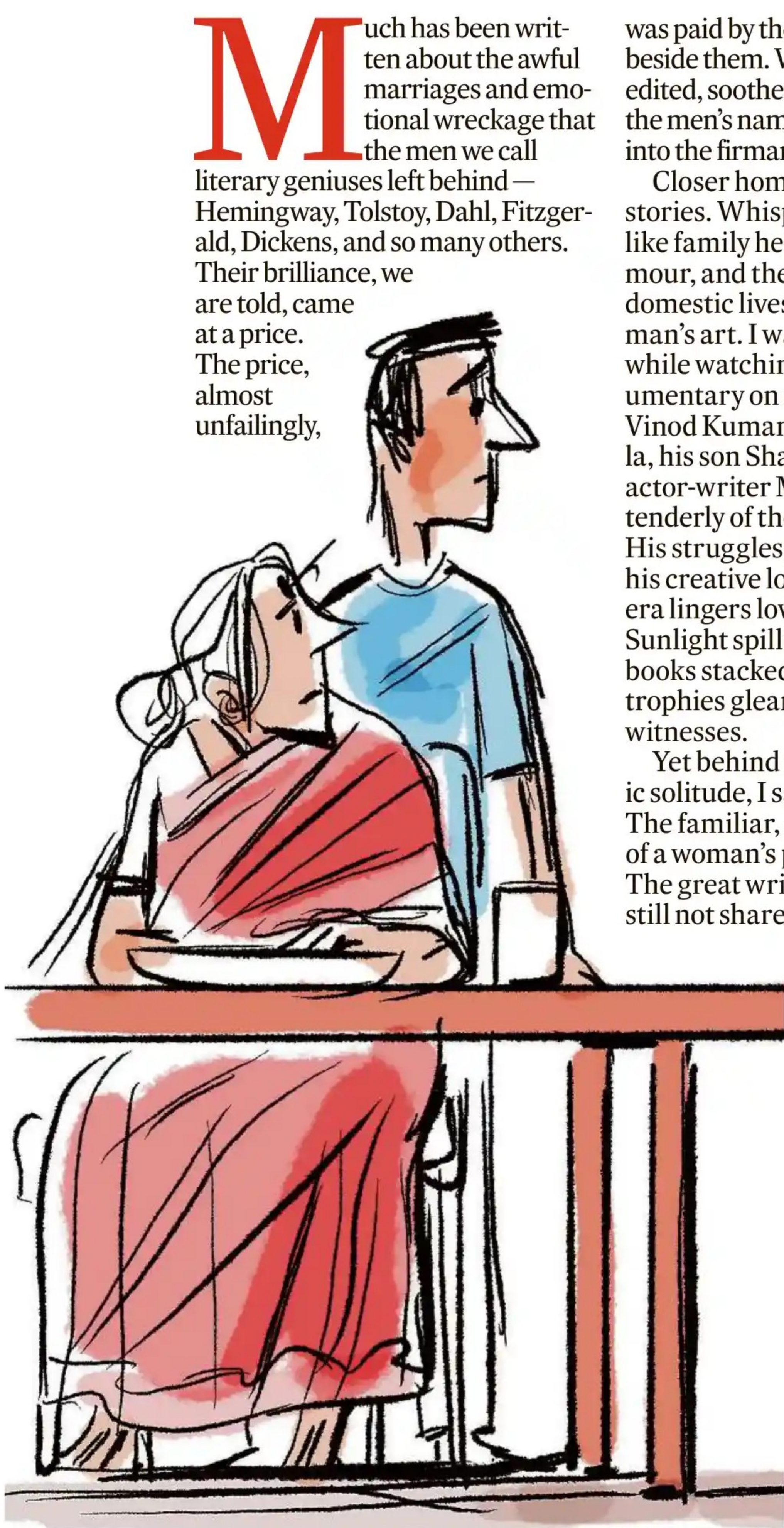
ness, but can she truly believe in his intentions? As grief tightens its hold, Jihad retreats into the one place she feels safe: an old sketchbook filled with memories of her mother. Through art and storytelling, she begins to reconnect with the past, but what starts as a personal escape soon becomes something far more powerful. Can she find the strength to embrace who she is, reclaim her voice, and bring colour back into her life?

Zoufka Katouh is a Canadian writer with Syrian roots and the first Syrian author to be published in both the US and the UK in the young adult category.



A seat at the table

Dining table dynamics in India are a reflection of patriarchy and authority. Generations of men have not sat at the table with their wives, daughters, or sisters for a meal together. Although the site of silence is now turning into a site of speech with the younger generation speaking up, there's still a long way to go, writes **Meenakshi Jha**



Much has been written about the awful marriages and emotional wreckage that the men we call literary geniuses left behind — Hemingway, Tolstoy, Dahl, Fitzgerald, Dickens, and so many others. Their brilliance, we are told, came at a price. The price, almost unfailingly,

was paid by the women who lived beside them. Wives who typed, edited, soothed, and vanished while the men's names rose, gleaming, into the firmament of genius.

Closer home too, there are stories. Whispers passed down like family heirlooms, reliable rumour, and the quiet testimony of domestic lives lived in service to a man's art. I was reminded of this while watching a recent bio-documentary on noted Hindi writer Vinod Kumar Shukla. In it, Shukla, his son Shashwat Gopal, and actor-writer Manav Kaul speak tenderly of the senior writer's life. His struggles, his forgetfulness, his creative longevity. The camera lingers lovingly on the details. Sunlight spilling through trees, books stacked on humble tables, trophies gleaming like quiet witnesses.

Yet behind this portrait of poetic solitude, I saw something else. The familiar, disquieting silence of a woman's presence erased. The great writer, it seems, could still not share a meal with his wife.

Why couldn't men of that generation dine with their wives? I have seen it too often. That daily ritual of separation. That small, stubborn cruelty disguised as tradition. How can someone who writes of love, compassion, and humanity fail to practice it at the most basic, intimate level

across the dinner table? In India, the dinner table has never been just a dining space. Sociologist M N Srinivas described commensality as a form of social code, where rules of eating together signal rank, distance, and belonging within the household and the community. Food becomes a silent language of status and purity. Who sits where matters, who serves matters more.

Data reveals inequality

According to a 2024 paper published in *Population Studies* which used survey data from households across four Indian states, nearly 28 per cent of surveyed families follow the mealtime custom of girls eating after boys. Hierarchy is taught young, absorbed with the first lessons of hunger and waiting.

Yet another paper published in *PLOS One* (2021) concludes that women who eat last report worse mental health outcomes, independent of income or class. This pattern is not confined to remote villages. It shows up across large swaths of the country, illustrating how entrenched the everyday ordering of food, gender, and hierarchy remains.

The study taps into the 2011 India Human Development Survey which put a number to what many already knew in their bones: in roughly one in four Indian households, women ate only after the men had finished. Data from NFHS-5 also shows a nutrition gap, with 57 per cent of women between 15 and 49 years reporting to be anaemic. The hierarchy of the table, it turns out, has a physiology. And it begins early.

Reform movements understood that if you can break the

rule of who eats with whom, you strike at the heart of social domination. In Tamil Nadu, Dravidian and self-respect movements spearheaded by leaders like social activist-politician Periyar deliberately used shared meals and public dining as a challenge to caste hierarchy, because eating together collapses distance in a way speeches and slogans often cannot.

From silence to speech

And yet, if the dining table was once the site of silence, it is now becoming the site of speech. What looks like rudeness, daughters calling their parents "tyrants" over a disagreement, is also the sound of a long-delayed democracy arriving inside the home. Earlier generations were trained to swallow their anger with their food, to accept authority as fate.

Today, the argument itself signals movement. It shows a refusal to obey simply because obedience was inherited. It is uncomfortable, even ugly at times.

It is also proof that the family is no longer a monarchy pretending to be a home.

Symbol of hierarchy

This refusal to share a meal is not a harmless quirk of custom. It is a symptom of hierarchy, the invisible scaffolding that has long held up great men.

M N Srinivas also wrote about purity-pollution codes, how notions of pollution shape everyday life, deciding who can touch what, who can sit where, and whose presence is treated as contaminating. The logic travels easily into the home.

A woman's place becomes

fixed not by love, but by order. She serves, she waits, she eats later. The separation becomes so routine that it stops looking like violence and starts looking like culture.

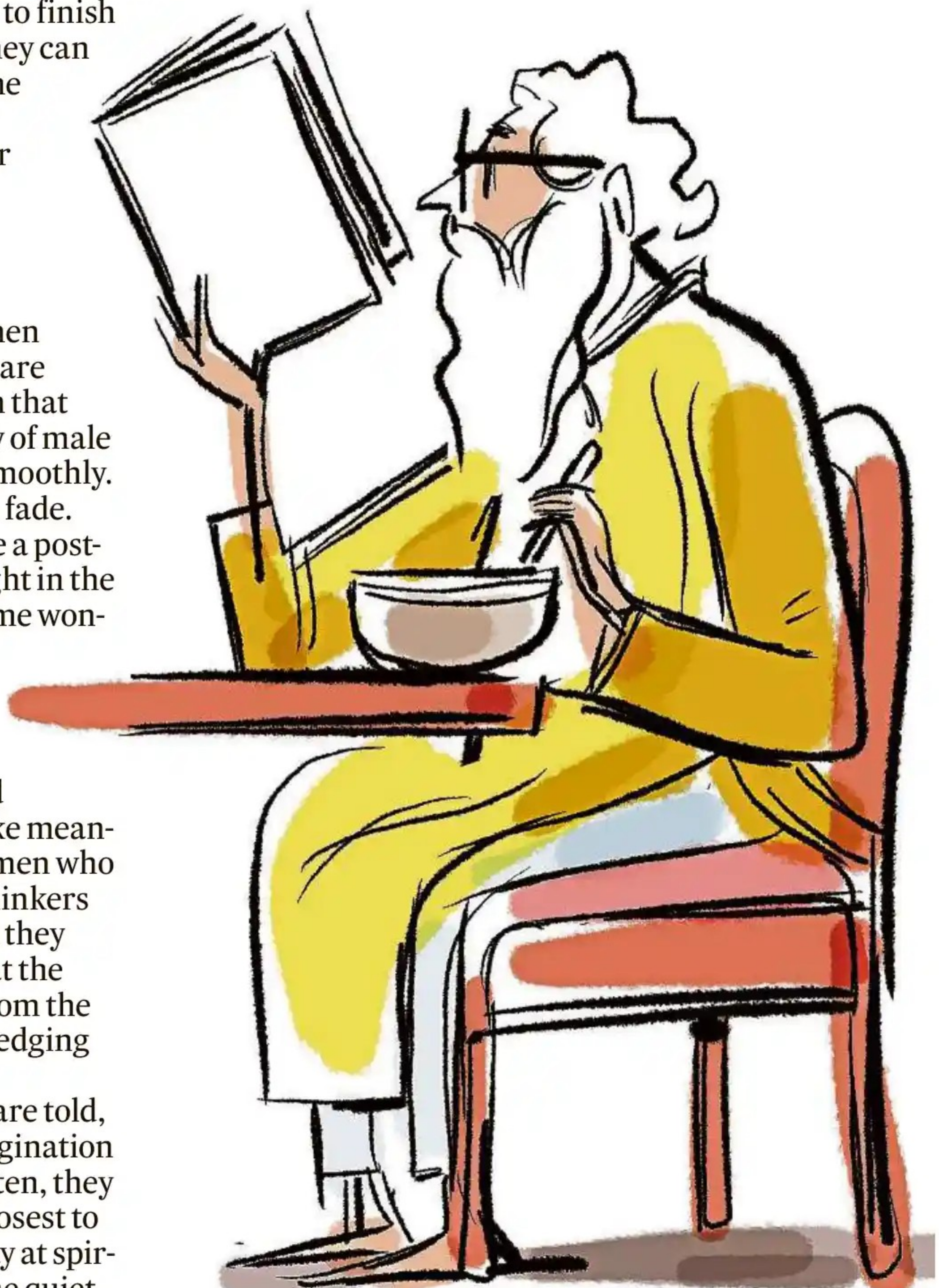
And this is not a relic I am describing from someone else's past. In my own home, older men, and even some men of my generation, still do not eat with their wives at the dining table. Women in my own and extended families still wait for the men to finish their meals before they can serve themselves. The hierarchy is so ordinary that it passes for manners.

Bechdel test for literary geniuses

In these homes, women are not equals. They are the background hum that keeps the machinery of male brilliance running smoothly. They cook, care, and fade. Their names become a postscript, an afterthought in the credit roll. It makes me wonder if there should be a Bechdel test for literary geniuses. A test for their lives. Would they pass if they spoke meaningfully with the women who sustained them as thinkers and creators? Would they pass if they ever sat at the same table, eating from the same plate, acknowledging the same hunger?

Great writers, we are told, shape the moral imagination of a society. Yet so often, they also wreck what is closest to them. They chip away at spirit, confidence, and the quiet,

hidden talents of the women who stood beside them. Perhaps it is time we measured genius differently. Not by the books on the table, but by who is invited to sit and eat at it. In the end, the filmmaker was kind enough to include the wife's name in the credits of the Vinod Kumar Shukla film. A courtesy or a token acknowledgment that she was there all along, just not in the frame.



DH ILLUSTRATION: SAJITH KUMAR

Travel

Bolivia's Salar De Uyuni is not only the world's largest salt flat but also a landscape dotted with hot springs, giant cactii, flamingoes, and llamas, writes **Vidhi Bubna**

Salar De Uyuni is the world's largest salt flat in the world. Spanning 10,000 square kilometres, Uyuni holds ten billion tonnes of salt. The landscapes are pristine and post rainfall, between December and April, Uyuni turns into the most magical reflective mirror. Travellers often come to this path to experience a deep sense of nothingness where they don't see anything for miles, apart from the salt flats around them from horizon to horizon.

"Is Bolivia safe?" I ask my guide Manuel Cortez, full well aware of the public perception surrounding the country. "It's safe if you're with the right people," he says in Spanish. Right then, two fellow travellers jump in and share a story about how an entire family was abducted by a gang in the city a few days ago and asked to transfer their money to the leader of the gang. After they did, they walked without any scratch and were safely dropped back to their hotels with nothing but their passports. I shrug. Beyond public perception, Bolivia is beautiful, yet carries some threats and I'm lucky to be with a safe group of people.

From the moment my Uyuni tour starts, I am struck by the wide landscapes. Though many Indians visit South America, I don't see any of them in Bolivia; for days on end, I am the only Indian. Most people converse in Spanish but luckily it's a language I picked up young in school. I converse with the guide freely. As he drives for hours at an end, he chews on coca leaves to acclimatise



Towering cactii. (PHOTOS BY AUTHOR)

Salt flats that cast a spell



Salt flats that stretch endlessly.

HOW TO GET TO UYUNI



To get to Salar De Uyuni, you can take a three-day road trip from the Chile border near Atacama desert. Alternatively, you can get to Uyuni and explore the salt flats.



Uyuni is around 12 hours away from the major city of La Paz which is connected to other South American and North American air routes.

I took a guided tour from Atacama Desert and made a three-day-long adventurous journey to Uyuni.

With a valid US visa, Bolivia offers visa on arrival for Indians at USD 140. However, a visa applied from India or an embassy visa is likely to cost much less.



Flamingoes around the lakes add colour to the landscape.

himself. I sit by his side and we chat for hours with pristine sights whizzing past us.

Wildlife in Uyuni

Uyuni is home to flamingoes that are found around lakes such as Laguna Colorada, Hedionda and Cañapa. Flamingoes often blend with the colours of the Laguna Colorada, so carrying a set of binoculars is helpful for sightings. Lucky enough, I spot the rare James flamingo.

Occasionally, an Andean gull can be seen flying across the sky. The Andean goose is often spotted in the same areas as the flamingo. Vizcacha, vicuñas, llamas and culpeos are spotted in the green bushy areas towards the Chilean border.

Smaller birds like the greenish and bright rumped yellow finches are found in shrubby waters on the edge of the salt flats. While Uyuni has an element of being solitary, the presence of animals makes one realise that life can exist in harsh situations and wildlife is resilient.

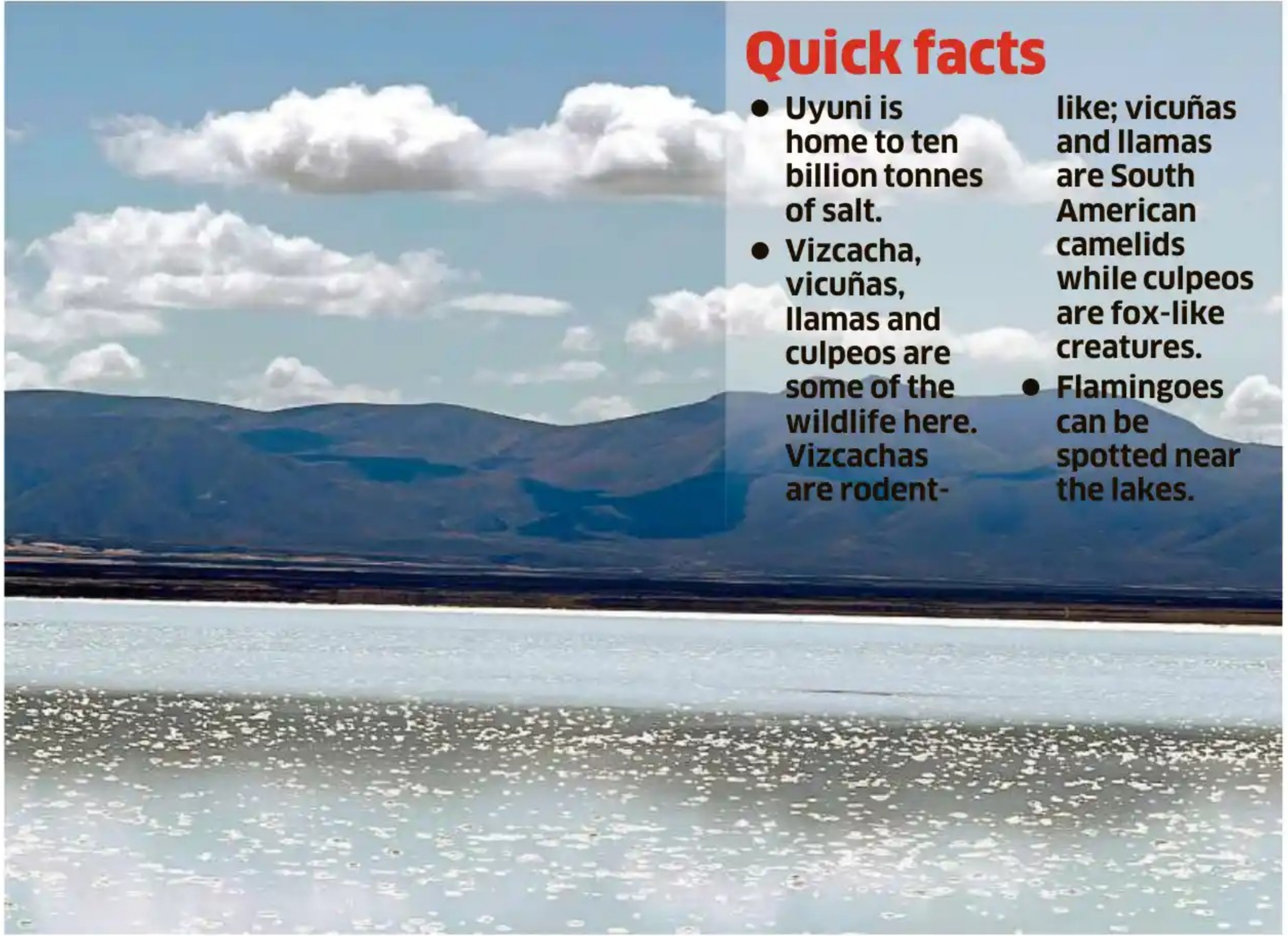
Hot springs

Salar De Uyuni has some naturally occurring hot springs in the middle of the area.

They are formed by volcanic geysers heating the water. I sat in one such hot spring for hours while gazing at the nothingness around me.



Camelids are commonly found on pastoral patches at the edges of the salt flats.



The infinite salt flats create a mirror-like surface, casting reflections.

Art in the middle of nowhere

Like every place on earth which inspires humanity, Salar De Uyuni is the artistic canvas of many artists. In the middle of nowhere, I chanced upon an art installation carrying flags of over 100 countries.

To me, the artwork represented unity in humanity. This is particularly so in destinations like Uyuni where life demands resilience, and boundaries of countries blur. The spiritual element that connects all of humanity becomes more visible.

The train graveyard is an intriguing place which looks almost extraterrestrial. There are train tracks and abandoned train parts in the middle of nowhere. It feels like aliens visited the spot to create something new and abandoned the project midway, while leaving the space for humans to

marvel at. Some sci-fi structures and robotic artwork is located not too far from the train graveyard. Some museum shops also sell locally harvested salt along with souvenirs made of salt. Isla Incahuasi is a cactus-filled area, with each cactus spanning over ten metres in length. For miles, nothing is visible besides moving jeeps which ferry travellers across Uyuni.

Transformational experience

Travelling across Uyuni is transformational beyond measure. It's a unique landscape and the reflection of the sky in the water makes it unbelievable. "God sits in Uyuni and lets you see his creation with wonder," says my tour guide Manuel. I believe him. For me, Uyuni is a place which touched my soul and the landscapes made me cry. It's a place I'll carry with me for a lifetime.

Quick facts

- Uyuni is home to ten billion tonnes of salt.
- Vizcacha, vicuñas, llamas and culpeos are some of the wildlife here. Vizcachas are rodent-like; vicuñas and llamas are South American camelids while culpeos are fox-like creatures.
- Flamingoes can be spotted near the lakes.

In one corner of a restaurant kitchen, citrus peels are being dehydrated into ash salts that are meant to finish cocktails and small plates. Nearby, watermelon rinds sit fermenting with mustard seeds and jaggery to become probiotic pickles. Coffee grounds that would have once been discarded after brewing are now folded into cocoa rubs for meats, while onion skins, carrot peels, tomato scraps, herb stems, and mushroom trimmings are finding their way back into dishes in the form of powders, broths, oils, garnishes, and seasoning blends.

Across Indian kitchens, the bin is slowly becoming part of the pantry. Chefs are discovering entirely new flavour possibilities from scraps and by-products that were traditionally overlooked. Citrus skins offer bitterness and aromatic oils that juice alone cannot deliver.

Vegetable peels, once dehydrated or fermented, develop concentrated umami and smokiness. Fermented trims introduce acidity and complexity that chefs are using as central flavour elements rather than secondary additions.

The movement also arrives at a time when global conversations around food waste are intensifying.

According to the United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) Food Waste Index Report, over one billion meals are wasted every day worldwide across the household, retail, and food service sectors.

Rediscovering Indian kitchen wisdom
Yet for many Indian chefs, the idea itself does not feel particularly new. "For me, root-to-stem, no-waste cooking is not really a 'new' idea in Indian kitchens," says Tarannum Sehgal, chef-founder at Delhi's Top Banana. "Our mothers and grandmothers have long used fruits and vegetables in the most complete way possible, from peels to pulp to leaves, and sometimes even roots. Whatever is edible has always found its way onto the plate," Sehgal adds.

Indian home kitchens have historically practised circular cooking, long before sustainability became a restaurant trend. Watermelon peels became sabzis, citrus skins turned into pickles, stale bread, and rotis were transformed into snacks, and vegetable scraps were routinely used for stocks, broths, and chutneys. Describing traditional Indian kitchens as "inherently circular," Puja Sahu, founder of The Potbelly (Delhi), says, "Ingredients which are often overlooked, like citrus peels, especially from lemons, are sun-dried and infused into syrups or chutneys, adding a sharp, bittersweet complexity that fresh juice alone can't achieve. For us, this shift isn't about reinvention, but rediscovery, of a way of cooking that respects the ingredient in its entirety."

Rise of circular kitchens
Gurbaj Sandhu, corporate chef at Minimal-

Used coffee grounds are folded into cocoa rubs; watermelon rinds are fermented into probiotic pickles — increasingly, chefs across India are finding creative ways to turn food peels and trimmings into gourmet delights, writes Anjali Kochhar

SCRAP APPEAL



ist Hotels, explains that kitchen scraps are increasingly being treated as "untapped ingredients" rather than leftovers. Citrus peels are dehydrated and burnt into ash salts that add smoky-citrus notes to dishes. Used coffee grounds are repurposed into cocoa rubs with earthy bitterness.

Pineapple skins are fermented into tepache and later reduced into glazes, while avocado seeds are transformed into spice blends. Watermelon rinds are fermented with mustard seeds and jaggery to create sweet-spicy pickles layered with acidity and probiotic depth.

"These are not secondary elements anymore," Sandhu says, adding, "They are becoming defining components of the dish." This shift is also fundamentally changing kitchen operations. Traditional restaurant workflows followed a linear system; ingredi-

ents were prepped, cooked, plated, and the excess discarded. Many kitchens are now moving towards circular systems where every part of an ingredient is assessed for secondary use.

According to Chetna Chopra, culinary director at Gurgaon's OMO, the process begins during the prep itself, where usable scraps are segregated immediately instead of being thrown away. Herb stems are stored separately for oils and infusions. Vegetable trims are frozen for stocks and broths. Citrus peels are categorised based on whether they will become syrups, candied garnishes, seasoning powders, or dehydrated flavouring agents. Her kitchen transforms onion peels, mushroom stems, and carrot skins into a Japanese-inspired dashi powder that adds savouriness and umami across dishes. Tomato skins left behind during pizza sauce preparation are dehydrated into concentrated tomato powder used for finishing



and plating. Overripe oranges, apples, and berries are repurposed into compotes for desserts and ice creams. "Sustainability is built into the way we prep and design dishes rather than treated as a separate process," Chopra explains.

She points to OMO's Naga chilli cauliflower dish as an example of root-to-stem cooking in practice. While the florets are tempura-fried and served as the hero element, the stems are transformed into a couscous-style base that adds texture and body, and the remaining cauliflower is used further in pickles and garnishes.

Creativity beyond sustainability

For several chefs, the movement is now extending beyond environmental responsibility into culinary experimentation. One such example comes from Top Banana, where Sehgal describes a bar snack called 'Fritto Misto', made using aubergine, ladyfinger, beetroot, radish, carrots, and colocasia, sliced and fried until crisp. The peels and trimmings generated during preparation are fermented into a ketchup called trimchi, which accompanies the dish.

Another example comes from the restaurant's cocktail programme. Almonds used to infuse Pisco, a spirit made from fermented grapes, for a drink called 'Sour Grapes' are not discarded after flavour extraction. Instead, they are repurposed into boozy almond milk, which later becomes almond ice cream served in a dessert pairing. "That kind of cross-utilisation is something I really enjoy," Sehgal says.

A similar approach is visible in the kitchen of Mujeebur Rehman, executive sous chef at Sayaji Hotel Vadodara, where leftover bread is transformed into crisps and crumb textures, while whey from dairy preparations is worked into sauces. Vegetable peels are slow-roasted to create house seasoning powders.

"This mindset has opened up a new layer of creativity in our kitchen, where flavours like gentle bitterness, natural acidity, and deep umami are celebrated rather than discarded," he says.

Umesh Singh, executive chef at Novotel New Delhi City Centre, also explains how pineapple peels are incorporated into chutneys while vegetable roots and citrus skins are dehydrated into finishing elements for desserts and drinks.

"The shift is not just about sustainability as a concept, but about expanding the flavour vocabulary of the kitchen," Singh says. "When



Sour grapes cocktail.
PICS: TOP BANANA

WASTE AS AN INGREDIENT
Citrus peels: Ash salts, syrups, chutneys, candied garnishes, cocktail cordials
Onion peels: Umami-rich dashi powder, seasoning blends
Tomato skins: Concentrated tomato powder for garnishes
Watermelon rinds: Probiotic pickles
Coffee grounds: Cocoa rubs for meats, dessert flavouring
Pineapple skins: Tepache (fermented pineapple beverage), chutneys, glazes
Vegetable trims and peels: Stocks, powders, broths, and seasoning salts
Avocado seeds: Nutty spice blends
Whey from dairy prep: Sauces
Overripe fruits: Compotes, dessert toppings, ice cream accompaniments
Almonds in cocktail infusions: Boozy almond milk and almond ice cream
Cauliflower stems: Couscous-style base for plated dishes



Fritto Misto, a bar snack.
you start working with trims and by-products, you're forced to think differently, and that's where genuine innovation happens."

Rethinking what 'waste' means
The larger transformation perhaps lies in changing the perception of scraps themselves. Kitchens are increasingly training teams to look at peels, grounds, stems, bones, and leftover trims not as unusable excess, but as ingredients with unrealised potential.

Sandhu says the process requires structured systems, recipe standardisation, staff training, and careful attention to food safety. Fermentation timelines, dehydration temperatures, storage methods, and batch processing all need consistency.

"What I think is unique is not just the technique, but the attitude behind it," Sehgal says, adding, "A peel is not 'leftovers'; it is a possible pickle, ketchup, stock, garnish, or seasoning."

Wellness

Surgery once meant large incisions before minimally invasive techniques, cameras, and sensitive instruments took over. Robotic surgery involving instruments that mimic natural wrist movements is the next big leap, write Dr Jagannath Dixit and Dr Praveen Kumar Kaudlay

Healing touch of a robot

For decades, surgery was guided by a simple belief: the bigger the incision, the better the outcome. That idea has now been firmly laid to rest. Advances in surgical science have shown that well-performed minimally invasive surgery (MIS) can deliver results equal to, and often better than, traditional open procedures, while causing far less trauma to the patient. This shift has driven the gradual evolution of surgery from large open incisions to laparoscopy, which uses small incisions, cameras, and delicate instruments to reduce pain, shorten hospital stays, and speed up recovery. Today, robotic surgery represents the next leap forward, building on minimally invasive principles while incorporating technology that enhances a surgeon's vision and dexterity.

The journey of robotic surgery began decades ago. In the late 1980s, Imperial College London developed PROBOT for prostate surgery. This was followed by AESOP (voice-controlled camera holder) and ZEUS systems (for telesurgery), which allowed surgeons to control instruments remotely.

In 1985, the first robot-assisted procedure used the PUMA 200 robotic arm for a brain biopsy. In the UK, Professor Prokar Dasgupta, Professor of Robotic Surgery and Urological Innovation at King's College London, pioneered robotic urological procedures. Today, the da Vinci system, which was approved in the year 2000, leads the field and has become synonymous with robotic surgery worldwide.

Surgeon friendly
Dr Raghunath S K, urological oncologist and robotic surgeon, explains that robotic surgery enables the surgeon to operate from a master console located a short distance from the patient. Every hand movement is translated into precise, tremor-free instrument actions.

The surgeon is provided with a real-time, magnified, high-definition, three-dimensional view of the surgical field. The robotic instruments



PRECISE & NON-INVASIVE

- Robotic surgery is now used across several specialties, including urology (kidney, bladder, and prostate procedures), gastrointestinal oncology (stomach, pancreas, and colon), and head and neck surgery.
- Cardiac and thoracic procedures, along with kidney transplantation, have also begun to incorporate robotic techniques.

- Age is not a limiting factor provided the patient is medically fit, and the indication is appropriate.
- Functional outcomes are particularly impressive in head-and-neck and pelvic surgeries.

mimic natural wrist movements, offering seven degrees of freedom, which allows safe and precise surgery in narrow and complex anatomical areas that are difficult or impossible to access using open or conventional laparoscopic techniques. Additionally, this approach significantly reduces surgeon fatigue during lengthy procedures and, in turn, helps extend a surgeon's operative career.

Faster recovery
Precision is especially valuable in major cancer surgeries, where large blood vessels and vital nerves must be navigated carefully. Robotic instruments help minimise tissue damage, reduce blood loss and improve nerve preservation. These advantages lead to faster recovery

and earlier discharge. According to Professor Dasgupta, precision can also make robotic surgery cost-effective by reducing complications and the need for prolonged postoperative care. Importantly, core surgical principles, especially in cancer treatment, remain unchanged, whether the operation is performed openly, laparoscopically, or robotically.

Patients experience clear benefits. Minimally invasive robotic procedures cause less disruption to the immune system, allowing earlier initiation of chemotherapy, immunotherapy or radiotherapy. In urological surgeries, complications such as urinary incontinence and sexual dysfunction are less common. Tumours can be removed through small incisions, with excellent specimen quality and reduced risks of infection

and post-operative pain. Short-term outcomes, including a quicker return of bowel function and mobility, are superior to those of open surgery, and long-term cancer control continues to show encouraging results.

Artificial intelligence

Artificial intelligence is increasingly integrated into surgical systems, but experts stress that technology assists, not replaces, the surgeon. "The machine and the man behind the machine are both important," says Dr Raghunath. Professor Dasgupta highlights innovations such as combining robotic surgery with 3D printing. Creating a 3D model of a patient's cancerous prostate allows surgeons to see and even feel the tumour before surgery. "The model restores the sense of touch and removes guesswork," he notes. This approach, pioneered at Guy's and St Thomas' hospitals in London, has personalised robotic surgery for individual patients.

Despite these advances, open and laparoscopic surgeries remain essential. Trauma cases often require open surgery. In India, where access to advanced technology is uneven and costs remain high, traditional techniques continue to play a vital role.

Cost remains a significant barrier to the widespread adoption of robotic surgery. However, increased use and market competition are expected to lower prices. India's indigenous robotic system offers a more affordable alternative, pointing to a future where advanced surgical care becomes accessible to a broader population. With the expansion of 5G networks, distance telesurgery, allowing surgeons to operate remotely across the country, may soon become a reality.

(Dr Jagannath Dixit is a senior robotic surgeon in Bengaluru. Dr Praveen Kumar Kaudlay is a consultant haematologist with a special interest in stem cell transplantation at Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust, UK. He can be reached at praveen.kaudlayl@nhs.net.)

Pass the salt (or not)!

DR SABINE KAPASI

A salt shaker, a bottle of soy sauce, and a jar of pickle are common in every kitchen. These feel like ordinary fixtures of daily cooking, yet they sit at the centre of one of the most preventable public health crises of our time. Hypertension cases are climbing in cities across India, and the daily diet, specifically its sodium content, is a primary driver. The urgency of this moment is reflected in the WHO's decision to launch the second edition of the Shake the Salt Habit package recently, a global framework dedicated entirely to sodium reduction.

In 2021, the World Health Organisation estimated that the global average sodium consumption was 4,278 mg per day, or about 11 gm of salt a day. The WHO recommended limit is less than 2,000 mg, or under 5 gm, approximately one teaspoon. Most people consume over double that amount every single day. As per WHO estimates, approximately 1.7 million deaths annually in 2023 were linked to excess sodium consumption.

Sodium causes the body to retain water, which raises blood volume and pushes pressure against artery walls. This sustained pressure damages blood vessels, stiffens arteries, strains the heart, and increases the risk of cardiovascular disease, stroke, kidney damage, and gastric cancer.

Most people assume their salt intake is modest because they add little at the table. Dietary sodium largely comes from processed and packaged foods, in-

cluding breads, instant noodles, chips, processed meats, bakery products, condiments, and sauces. Public health experts now call this the hidden sodium economy, where food systems consistently expose populations to saltier packaged options while lower-sodium choices are harder to find and more expensive.

Hypertension among youth

What is more worrying is the trend of younger Indians getting into the hypertension risk pool much earlier. Late-night snacking, sedentary lifestyles and dependence on food delivery apps mean hypertension is no longer a middle-age disease. For urban households, raised blood pressure often originates in food factories and delivery platforms, not at the dining table. This sodium, embedded into meals before they even reach the consumer, is the threat.

Urban lifestyles accelerate the problem. Long hours, convenience meals, and restaurant cooking which routinely uses high salt for taste and preservation build a pattern that registers in blood pressure even when the person feels healthy. According

to WHO, every one US dollar invested in sodium reduction programmes returns at least 12 dollars in health gains. Globally, 2026 will mark a shift to mandatory action. The WHO's new guidance calls for reformulation policies, front-of-pack warning labels and regulation-driven sodium reduction, rather than relying on individual awareness alone. *(The author is a global health strategist and UN advisor.)*



NFHS-6 data on hypertension

The National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-6 data for 2023-24 released last month says that 19.4 per cent of women and 22.1 per cent of men (of age 15 and above in India) have high blood pressure or are on some medication to keep it under control. Although it is a dip from NFHS-5 data (2019-21) which pegged the percentage at 21.3 for women and 24 for men, concerns over hypertension need addressing.

DIFFERENT STROKES

A mirror to human suffering

Across centuries, conflict has provoked reflection as much as resistance and artists have responded not merely as documentarians, but as witnesses, writes Giridhar Khasnis

“Climate change is here. It is terrifying. And it is just the beginning,” warned United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres in July 2023, declaring that the era of global warming had given way to ‘the era of global boiling.’ Nearly three years later, that sense of dread has only deepened. Wars and conflicts continue to erupt across the world; the spectacle of violence and displacement confronts us through numbing imagery. Buildings collapse into dust, cities vanish within minutes, and lives are reduced to fleeting headlines across our screens. The speed of modern media is incredible; even if the credibility of ‘breaking’ news remains suspect. In such moments, it is art that returns with renewed urgency. Artists have long responded to war not merely as documentarians, but as witnesses, thinkers, and mourners. Across centuries, conflict has provoked reflection as much as resistance. Certain works have become inseparable from the visual memory of war — Guernica by Pablo Picasso, or The Third of May 1808 by Francisco Goya. Their power remains undeniable. Yet beyond these iconic images lies a quieter and less familiar body of work — paintings that resist spectacle but hold a mirror to human suffering in ways that are intimate, unsettling, and enduring. Here are seven such works — all but one more than a century old — that approached war not through heroism or victory,



‘Prisoners from the Front’ (1866) by Winslow Homer.



‘Gassed’ (1919) by John Singer.

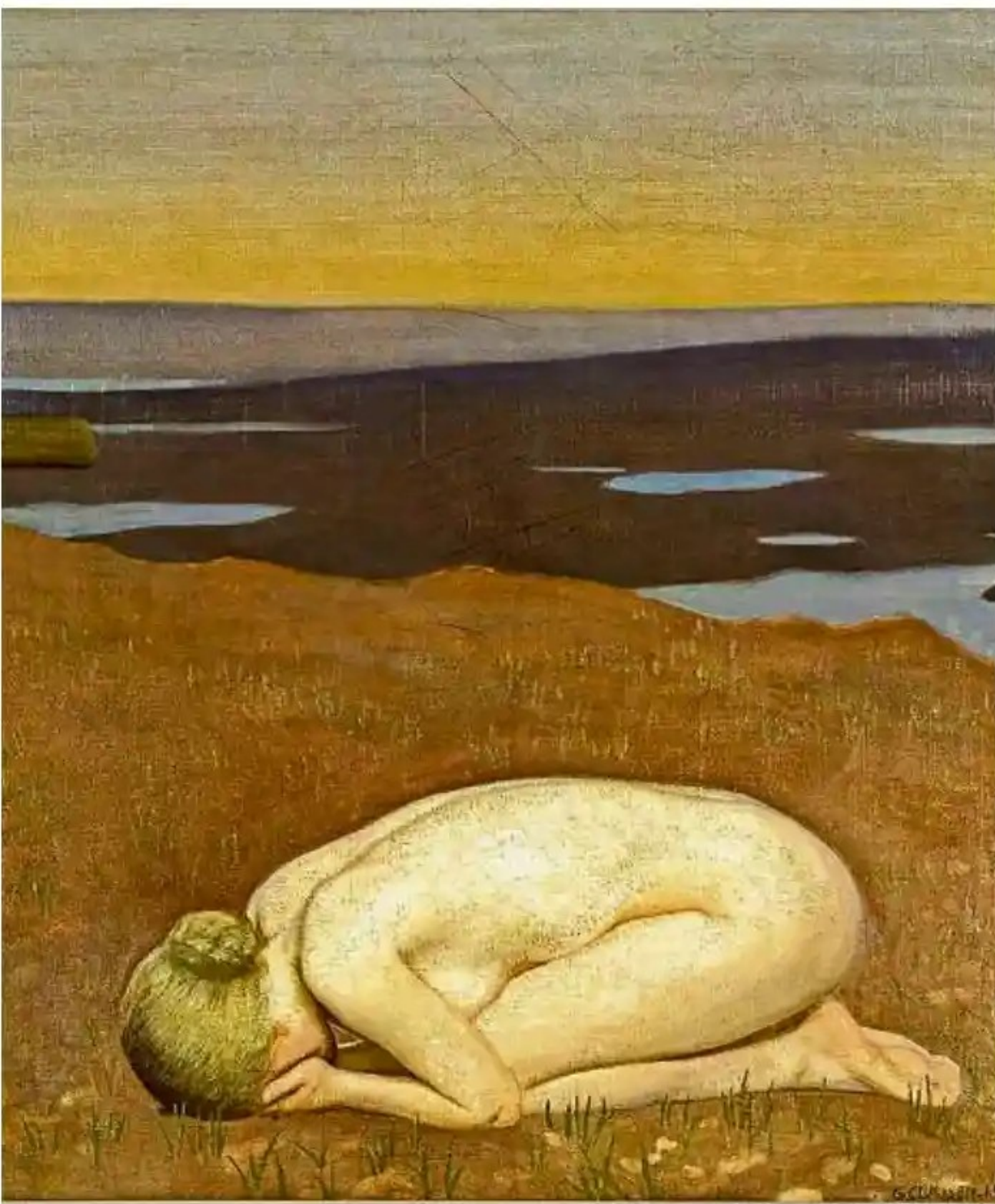
but through its tragic aftermath. Regarded as one of the most important paintings of the American Civil War, Prisoners from the Front (1866) by Winslow Homer captures a moment of uneasy stillness. A group of captured Confederate soldiers stands before a Union officer. The battle is over, yet tension lingers in the posture and gaze of the defeated men, who have lost their position but not their pride. Winslow, only thirty when he painted the scene, had been on the front lines himself. Rather than dramatising conflict, he presents a psychologically charged encounter that early critics struggled to classify. In Der Krieg (1896), Swiss Symbolist painter Arnold Böcklin offers a visual more prophetic than literal. The personified figures of War, Pestilence, and Death sweep across a doomed sky above a city. Painted late in Böcklin’s life, the work feels like a warning delivered to humanity itself. Decades later, under the same title, German artist Otto Dix produced his harrowing series of World War I etchings, often regarded as among the most unflinching depictions of war in Western art.



‘The Menin Road’ (1919) by Paul Nash.

Lady Mourning (1916) by George Clausen contains no battlefield, no weapons, and no visible violence. A solitary woman crouches in grief within a barren landscape. Created in response to the death of the artist’s daughter’s fiancé during the First World War, the painting defines war not through action, but through absence. The missing figure—never shown—dominates the canvas. George reminds us that the deepest wounds of war often unfold quietly,

in homes and landscapes. When Paths of Glory (1917) by C R W Nevinson was first exhibited in the Leicester Galleries, London, in 1918, it was censored for its blunt portrayal of death. Two soldiers lie face down in the mud, their bodies stripped of individuality. Their rifles and helmets become mute witnesses beside them. There is no heroism here, only the cold finality of death. Nevinson responded defiantly to authorities by displaying the work with the word “censored” pasted across it. A line of soldiers blinded by mustard gas moves hesitantly across the massive six-metre canvas of Gassed (1919) by John Singer Sargent. Known primarily for elegant society portraits, John brings an unexpected tenderness and silence to this devastating scene. The warm golden light contrasts sharply with the horror of chemical warfare, creating an unease that lingers long after viewing. The soldiers’ blindness becomes symbolic—not merely physical injury, but a broader moral and political sightlessness. In The Menin Road (1919), Paul Nash transforms the battlefield into a shattered, if surreal, dreamscape. Trees splinter into jagged forms while the earth dissolves into mud and stagnant water. Human presence becomes almost irrelevant. Paul, who served as an official war artist, wrote despairingly of the destruction he witnessed: “No pen or drawing can convey this country... no glimpse of the truth.” Paths of Glory (1917) by C R W Nevinson. A painting showing soldiers in a trench, with one soldier lying face down in the mud, suggesting a grim and somber scene.



‘Lady Mourning’ (1916) by George Clausen.

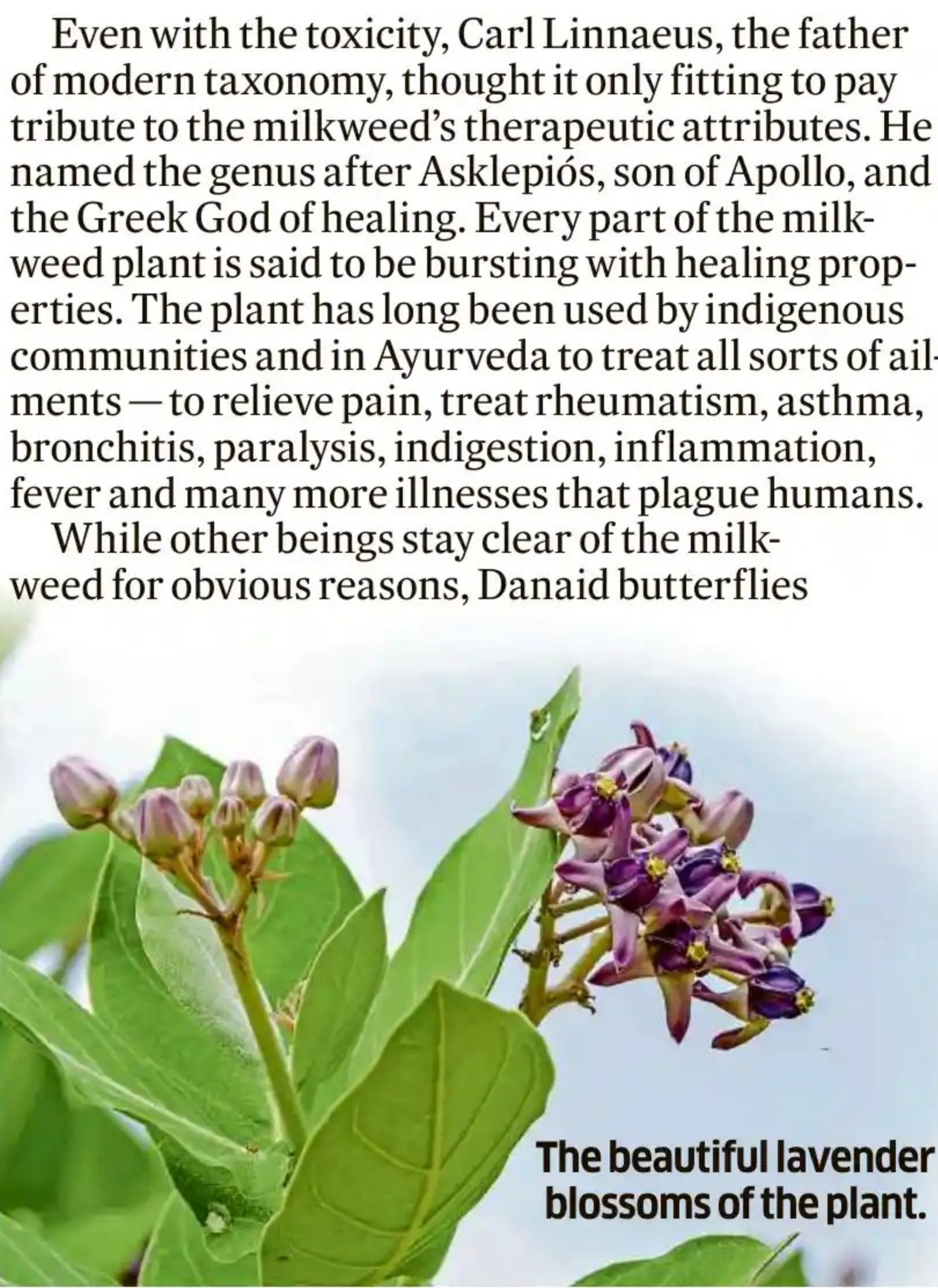
mer of God’s hand is seen anywhere.” In the painting, the land itself appears wounded. War is no longer confined to human bodies; it has seeped into the environment, altering it irreversibly. Finally, The Fascist Plane Flew By (1942) by Arkady Plastov unfolds not on a battlefield, but in an ordinary rural field beneath an empty sky. A warplane has passed overhead, leaving behind the still body of a young boy. The profoundly tragic work, which brought the Russian artist nationwide fame, is restrained in its composition yet devastating in implication. Arkady avoids spectacle entirely, allowing silence and stillness to carry the emotional weight. Works such as these may be less widely known than their iconic counterparts, but they remain no less powerful. Together, they remind us that war is not experienced only on battlefields. Its aftermath lingers in memory, in silence, in ruined landscapes, and in ordinary lives permanently altered. Wars may end. Their echoes rarely do.

ROOTING FOR NATURE

All the tea on the giant milkweed

There is a duality in being a milkweed; the plant is both harmful and healing, and the life cycles of several insects are tightly bound to it, writes Ramya Coushik

Some plants and trees pry deep into the memory vault, triggering nostalgia. The endless amusement from popping the flowerheads of Tridax daisies (Tridax procumbens), watching the delicate leaves of touch-me-nots (Mimosa pudica) fold at the slightest touch, the necklace strung together from milkweed blossoms adorning the deity at the Ganesha temple that I often accompanied my grandmother to as a little girl, playing with the wispy, silken pappus attached to the milkweed seed...the stash of childhood recollections linked to plants and trees is infinite. The last one in this line-up, the giant milkweed or Ekkada Gida in Kannada (Calotropis giganteae), is a vivid visual memory. One can still spot this large shrub in the countryside with its hallmark penta-petaled cream or lavender blossoms with a distinct ridged crown rising in the centre. We rarely clear weeds at Navilu Kaadu, and when we do, the giant milkweeds inevitably get clearance to stay. Why the special treatment for the milkweeds, you ask? The life cycles of several insects are tightly bound to this plant. In natural history, plants of the milkweed genus are exalted as the lone larval hosts of the Monarch butterflies (Danaus plexippus) that undertake epic cross-generational migrations between North America and Central Mexico and back, covering a whopping 5,000 kilometres and more. Milkweeds are the host plants for other brushfooted butterflies, too, of the Nymphalidae family from the Danainae subfamily, called milkweed butterflies. With the simple act of letting the milkweed plants take up a small patch of real estate on Navilu Kaadu soil, we get to play a tiny part in the enthralling life-cycles of Danaids such as plain tigers (Danaus chrysippus), striped tigers (Danaus genutia), glassy tiger (Parantica aglea), blue tigers (Tirumala limniace) and other Danaid species that have enthralled Indian scientists and lay people alike, with their biannual mass migration between the Western Ghats and the Eastern Ghats, seeking drier climates. There is a duality in being a milkweed — the plant is both harmful and healing. Around 200 milkweed species fall under the genus Asclepias within Apocynaceae, a family of toxic plants with over 400 genera distributed all over the planet (Fishbein 2023; Endress et al. 2018). Tear off a leaf or break off the stem, and the thing unleashes a milky latex with dreadful compounds — cardenolides that impede the functioning of the heart — as a shield against ending up in an herbivore’s gut. Tribes in Africa were known to use milkweed latex to poison their arrow tips.



The beautiful lavender blossoms of the plant.

Even with the toxicity, Carl Linnaeus, the father of modern taxonomy, thought it only fitting to pay tribute to the milkweed’s therapeutic attributes. He named the genus after Asklepiós, son of Apollo, and the Greek God of healing. Every part of the milkweed plant is said to be bursting with healing properties. The plant has long been used by indigenous communities and in Ayurveda to treat all sorts of ailments — to relieve pain, treat rheumatism, asthma, bronchitis, paralysis, indigestion, inflammation, fever and many more illnesses that plague humans. While other beings stay clear of the milkweed for obvious reasons, Danaid butterflies cleverly leverage the toxins in the milkweed to their advantage. These butterflies begin life as tiny eggs on the undersides of milkweed leaves. A genetic mutation shields their biological systems from the unsavoury fallout of supping on the milkweed. Milkweed flowers are entirely pollinated by insects, a phenomenon called entomophily. The carpenter bee of the genus Xylocopa, which has earlier featured in this column, is among the milkweed’s most prolific pollinators (Kale et al. 2025). The fruits, once dry, split open to release brown seeds borne on gossamer silk that parachute through the wind. The milkweed too is plagued by shrinking habitats from reckless urbanisation, deforestation and agricultural expansion, which in turn imperil the life journeys of the Danaid butterflies. This inevitably draws me to the role that cities and citizens can play in growing native plant species over exotic ones along avenues, in public parks and in our private gardens. Do you have native plant species in your home garden or balcony? Which birds and insects visit them? Write to me. I would love to hear all about it. Rooting For Nature is a monthly column on an off-kilter urban family’s trysts with nature on a natural farm. The author runs Green Goobé, a sustainable venture. Reach her at bluejaydiaries@gmail.com or @ramyacoushik on Instagram.

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